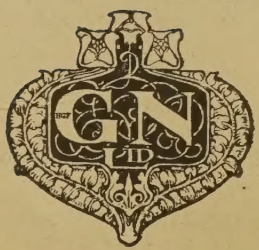
THE STRAND MAGAZINE
SOUTHAMPTON STREET
OFFICES

THE

STRAND MAGAZINE

An Illustrated Monthly



Vol. LX

JULY TO DECEMBER

London:

GEORGE NEWNES, LTD., 8—11, SOUTHAMPTON STREET, AND EXETER STREET, STRAND

1920

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GEORGE NEWNES, LIMITED, SOUTHAMPTON STREET, AND EXETER STREET, STRAND, LONDON, ENGLAND.

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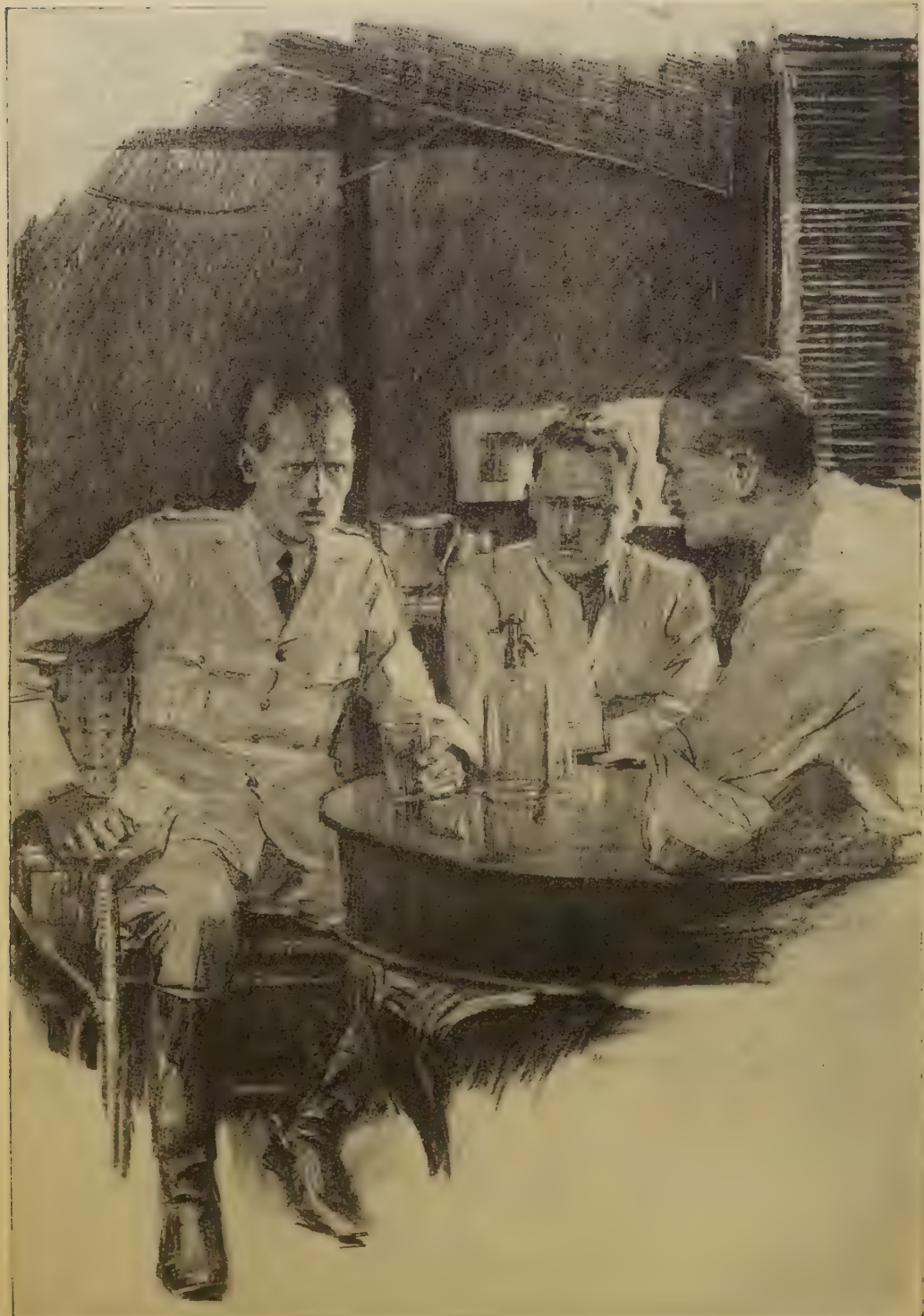


"'MY GOD, AMORY!' DICK SAT GLOWERING AT HIS HOST. 'HOW CAN YOU SPEAK SO CALMLY! DON'T YOU SEE WHAT A DEVIL OF A MESS WE'RE IN?'"

(*See page 4.*)

The SECOND CHANCE

By KATHLYN RHODES

ILLUSTRATED BY NORAH SCHLEGEL

"IT is rather an odd situation, isn't it?" Amory looked at the two men who sat at the table in more or less uncomfortable attitudes, and his voice was grim. "In there"—he pointed to the "chick" of beads which hung over the opening to an inner room—"lies a dead man: killed by one of us three. And only that one knows which of us is the"—he paused—"the murderer."

"One moment, Amory." Captain Ross, who had been sitting scribbling absently on a sheet of paper, raised his head suddenly. "Are you sure you're speaking correctly when you say Colonel Chalmers has been"—there was the same pause before the word—"murdered?"

"Yes, Amory—are you sure?" Dick Thornley spoke eagerly, hurriedly. "Mightn't the Colonel have shot himself? He—we don't know what private worries he had, and he—he looked queer when he came in."

For a moment Amory's grey eyes rested on the boy's twitching face; and young Thornley paled before the other's gaze.

"Don't look at me like that, Amory! I know—I know you fellows think I did it. But I didn't—before God you're wrong. I—I never did it!"

"No one has suggested that you did, Dicky." Ross spoke quickly. "As a matter of fact, it is not yet certain that anyone killed the Colonel. He might conceivably have shot himself."

"No." Amory's voice was decisive. "Colonel Chalmers was killed—shot with a revolver—mine, by the way—which the murderer then carried over to the big sofa and hid under a cushion. At least"—he paused—"I took it from there not twenty minutes ago."

"You found it? But what made you look there?" There was curiosity, but as yet no suspicion, in Ross's voice.

"I was a bit taken aback, as we all were"—he spoke casually—"on finding what had happened; and I sat down for a second to pull myself together. And in so doing"—he smiled rather frigidly—"I felt the revolver."

"He couldn't have put it there himself?"

"No. Quite impossible. Death must have been instantaneous—and in any case, why should Colonel Chalmers commit suicide? He had everything he wanted: a delightful home, money, promotion, and"—he paused—"and a daughter whom he adored. No, Ross. Chalmers wasn't the man to lose all these by a revolver-bullet."

At the mention of the dead man's daughter both the other men's faces had changed oddly. Into Ross's square-chinned, blue-eyed, rather obstinate face came the look of the man who, having failed to attain his heart's desire, has determined to hide that failure by a resolute composure, a dogged cheerfulness which shall admit no possibility of defeat; and he unconsciously drew himself up and set his lips together as though to prove his indifference to the subject.

But Dick Thornley, being younger and more undisciplined, showed all too plainly what the mention of the girl meant to him; and he flushed hotly, and his eyes flashed as Amory spoke so calmly of Miss Chalmers, as though he would fain have forbidden the speaker to take her name upon his lips.

How the name affected Amory himself no one was at liberty to observe; and he was only too grateful to his companions for their absorption in their own private emotions.

Presently Ross said, rather formally:—

"Well, since you are so certain that Colonel Chalmers met his death at the hands of one of us"—Dick started nervously—"what steps do you propose to take to clear up the matter? Wouldn't it be well to review the whole position from the beginning, and see if we can elicit any facts likely to be of value?"

"Quite so." Amory's voice was non-committal. "But before we start let's have

a drink. Dick, there's a siphon over there, and here's the whisky."

Thus requested, Dick Thornley rose from his seat and crossed the room to the shelf on which the siphon stood. He brought it back slowly, and the other men noted how his hand shook as he set it down, clumsily, on the table. But the tragedy of the afternoon was enough to account for shaken nerves; and after all there was a certain pallor, an unusual tension, about each of the three men who were implicated in that tragedy.

"Thanks, Dick." Amory held out the whisky bottle. "Help yourselves. I feel I can do with a stiff peg myself."

When the glasses were filled he began to speak again, looking ahead of him with expressionless eyes.

"TO begin with, this is our bungalow, Ross, yours and mine. Dick here dropped in to tiffin to-day, and after that, as it was confoundedly hot, and we none of us had any business on hand, we agreed to have a laze until tea-time, and then go down to the club. That's so, isn't it?"

"Yes. And just as we were settling down, in came Colonel Chalmers, looking very fagged, and said he didn't feel up to much, and would like a rest before going on to some show or other to meet his daughter."

"And so you advised him to go into your room and lie down for a bit."

"Just so, Dick. He agreed, saying his head ached; and we proceeded to settle ourselves as we chose. You, Dick, sat on here, smoking. Ross, you went into your room, through mine; and I went, as usual, on to the veranda."

"The result being," said Ross, quietly, "that there was no entrance into the Colonel's room except through one of the two rooms in which Dick and I were sitting, and——"

"And through the long door opening on to the veranda where I was sitting. That sums up the situation as far as we are concerned. Yet someone did get in; for when we rushed in, roused by the sound of a shot, we found the Colonel dead—shot through the heart."

Dick Thornley set down his glass noisily.

"Of course someone got in. I—I'm certain no one came my way. I was awake all the time." He stopped, bit his lips, then hurried on: "At least, perhaps I *was* asleep, and if so someone might have passed me."

"No, Dick, that won't wash." Ross spoke kindly, though his worried eyes belied his smile. "How often have you lamented the fact that you can't sleep in the daytime! I'll back you to keep awake on the hottest afternoon."

"But—but——" The boy began to stammer out something, but Amory stopped him with a gesture.

"Never mind that, Dick. You say no one came past you. Nor did anyone cross the veranda."

"How do you know? You might easily have closed your eyes for a minute."

"I might," returned Amory, dryly. "But it so happened that I did not. You see, I was writing a letter—an important letter."

"Then I'm the only one left?" Ross's quiet voice was unruffled. "And when I tell you that I slept peacefully until roused by the sound of a shot, you'll agree with me that the whole thing is most mysterious."

"Well, what are we going to do about it?" Dick reached for the siphon and squirted some soda, shakily, into his glass.

"Do?" Amory looked at him rather oddly. "What can we do? It seems to me that we are at a standstill."

"My God, Amory!" Dick set down the glass and sat glowering at his host. "How can you speak so calmly! Don't you see what a devil of a mess we're in? The Colonel comes here, to this bungalow, to spend a quiet hour or two, and he is murdered in his sleep. There is no one here but us three, the servants are all away—gone off to some *tomasha* or other—and yet there's a crime committed. Well, it puts us all in a pretty serious hole, doesn't it?"

"Of course it does." Ross took up the challenge. "And for that reason, because one of us is guilty and two are innocent, the guilty one must speak."

"Quite so," said Amory, quietly. "But which *is* the guilty one?"

Ross shrugged his shoulders and threw his half-smoked cigarette irritably into the ash-tray.

"Which of us, eh? Well, that remains to be seen. But—I can quite understand that things look black against *me*. You both know what a devil of a temper I have, and it's all over the place by now that the Colonel and I quarrelled last night—at the club. Oh, it was over the merest trifle—a personal matter, but we both got hot over it, and I admit I spoke a good deal more freely than I had any right to do."

"Yes, yes, I heard you'd quarrelled." Dick spoke eagerly. "Some fellow I met this morning told me about the row—and he said you were in no end of a rage afterwards, and letting off steam against the Colonel like anything."

"I'd had some drink by that time," said Ross, dryly. "And no one pays attention to a drunken man's ravings. But I realize that it puts me in a fix, for quite half-a-dozen fellows heard me letting myself go after the row."

"What about me?" Dick sounded defiant. "I was up before the Colonel this morning for one of his everlasting wiggings. Everyone knows he hated me, because when I first came out Miss Chalmers was kind to me, and he didn't like it. You both know how down he's always been on me, bullyragging me about every little thing."

"Nonsense, Dick!" To his surprise Amory spoke sharply. "The Colonel was a bit strict, but he was always just; and no one could resent his censure. And you know you *are* a bit slack at times—oh, over non-essentials!"—he saw the boy's rage mounting—"and no C.O. likes to see his subs running into debt and spending too much time over racing and cards."

"I know one thing!" Dick spoke passionately. "He wasn't fair to me—just because he knew I was in love with his daughter! That was why he was always beastly to me. Thought I wasn't good enough, I suppose, and p'r'aps I wasn't; but I can tell you his sneers—oh, in that beastly polite voice of his!—were jolly hard to bear, and I only put up with it because—because——" His anger fairly choked him, and he stopped short.

"Don't be a fool, Dick!" This time it was Ross who answered him, curtly enough. "We'll keep Miss Chalmers's name out of this, and raving like that doesn't do you any good."

"No. And time's passing." Amory glanced at his wrist-watch. "We can't hush this thing up much longer. But we *must* find out who shot the Colonel. Perhaps there are extenuating circumstances."

"Oh, I know what you mean!" Dick's eyes blazed. "You've made up your mind it's I because there was always a feud between me and the Colonel. But you're wrong, and it's simply cowardly to try to bully me into saying it was I who did it!"

"The cowardly deed was the murder, Dick." Amory spoke coldly. "The brave deed will be the owning up——"

"Owning up!" Dick sprang from his chair and stood opposite the other man, his fists clenched, his whole body shaking from head to foot. "If you're so keen on owning up, why don't you own up yourself? Why are *you* to be above suspicion? Ross here says he quarrelled with the Colonel last night—there's a motive for you! I was in trouble with him this morning—there's my motive! No suspicion is to rest on *you*, although it was *your* revolver that killed him! Why not? I ask you that! Why shouldn't *you* have killed the Colonel just as much as Ross or I?"

There was a pause before Amory replied to this challenge; and for a moment Ross's blue eyes searched his face with, for the first time, a hint of suspicion in their depths.

"Quite so, Dick." Amory spoke at last, quietly. "Why shouldn't I have killed the Colonel? True, I'd no apparent motive, but no one knows my business well enough to swear I wasn't at loggerheads secretly with him. So what if I say that I *did* kill Colonel Chalmers? It was my revolver, after all, that did the deed."

"No, no, Amory." Ross spoke impulsively. "You didn't do it. That I'll swear."

"But don't you hear what he says?" Dick's eyes shone with excitement. "He says he did—or as good as says so, anyhow! And so—and so we must help him to escape!" He looked round him eagerly. "Come, Ross, let's plan how to get him away. We can keep the thing dark for hours yet, and he can have a good start——"

"No, Dick." Amory's voice was quiet, and he looked the boy squarely in the eyes. "I'm not going to—escape."

"Not escape! But why not—in Heaven's name, why not?"

Still looking the other straight in the face Amory spoke quietly; and to Ross, who listened uncomprehendingly, his voice was oddly, almost terribly impressive.

"Because for the murderer there is no escape, Dick. He may get away for a time, but do you think he is ever really a free man again? No. There's never an hour in the day that he doesn't feel a ghostly hand on his shoulder, that he doesn't expect to hear a voice in his ear saying, 'Thou art the man!' There's never a night passes but he enacts again in his dreams the tragedy which has branded him with the brand of Cain. When he is alone he feels that he must go mad or die—when he is in the midst of his fellow-men he is seized with an almost uncontrollable impulse to rise and shout his ghastly secret to the world. Night and day the torture goes on and on; and at last he feels that death would have been a thousand times more merciful than this hell to which his own cowardice has condemned him."

"Amory—for God's sake——" It was Ross who spoke, hoarsely; but with his eyes fixed upon the boy, who cowered before him in an attitude of mortal terror. Amory went on speaking:—

"That's why it's no use attempting to escape, Dick. When a man has committed a crime like murder there's no way out—but one. Other men may have a second chance, thank God for it! But the man who kills his brother is accursed. Sooner or later the truth is bound to come out—and pray God it's not too late."

But now Dick had fallen into a chair and was hiding his face behind his shaking hands; and it was Ross who said, very quietly:—

"Too late? Amory, what do you mean?"

"I mean——" Amory's own face was

ghastly, his brow beaded with drops of sweat—"pray God that no man calls upon his brother to pay the debt that's his! For *that* is the unforgivable sin, Dick."

He went slowly across to the huddled figure in the chair; and then, while Ross's blue eyes watched him tensely, he laid one hand on the boy's shoulder.

"Dick, are you going to let another man pay your debt?"

Suddenly Dick Thornley shook off the heavy hand and sprang to his feet with blazing eyes.

"My God, Amory, don't go on! I did it—of course I did it—but I'll swear before God it was an accident! I never meant to kill him—God knows I never meant it! It was an accident, I tell you—the beastly thing went off in my hand. I only meant to frighten him——"

"You—you did it, Dick?" Now that the truth was out Ross knew he had suspected it all along.

"Yes. I'll tell you how it was." He seemed to find in speech relief from the terror which so plainly overwhelmed him. "You know how I was up before him this morning. He was on about—about everything—cards, wine, racing. You know I got into a mess with a moneylender in the Bazar last week, and he'd heard about it——"

He paused, gasping for breath; but in a moment he was off again wildly.

"He said I'd have to send in my papers. I begged him to give me another chance. I said I'd been a fool, but I'd do better. He wouldn't listen—said I was no credit to the regiment—and yet you fellows know I loved the regiment—and I meant to do better——"

"But that was this morning, Dick——" The interruption came from Ross.

"Yes. But when you left me in here this afternoon, and he was in the other room, I—I went in to beg him to give me another chance. I swore I'd do better, I'd turn over a new leaf. But he wouldn't listen. He said—oh, vile things"—he flushed scarlet at the memory of the words which had indeed stung his young manhood—"and at last I—I snatched up the revolver from the table and pointed it at him . . . he was sitting up on the bed, and I—I was seeing red by then, but I never meant—before God I never meant to do it. But the beastly thing went off, and he fell back—dead—and I flung the revolver on to the sofa and covered it up and had just time to rush out so that I could come in again with you others."

"Dick, as God's your witness"—Ross spoke earnestly—"is that the truth?"

"As God's my witness, yes!" He raised his haggard young face, and both men knew he had spoken truly at last. "But—there's no help for me, I suppose!—I did it, and I'll have to bear the brunt. But—oh my God, what will my mother say—what will she do when I—when I'm—hanged——"

"Shut up, Dick!" Amory spoke almost brutally in an attempt to check the boy's rising hysteria. "Perhaps there may be a way out. Don't speak for a moment—let me think what we can do——"

"You mean——" Dick turned to him eagerly, desperately. "You will help me—give me a chance?"

"But how, Amory! How's it to be done!" Ross spoke impulsively, and Amory made a gesture of impotence.

"I don't know—yet! But we must do something, and—good God, what's that!"

THERE was a sound of hurrying footsteps, a call in a man's voice; and the next moment Captain Nicholls, the regimental doctor, burst into the room impetuously.

The three men turned to him with one accord; but before anyone could demand an explanation of this sudden entrance he broke into voluble questioning.

"Any of you fellows know where Colonel Chalmers is? Is he here, by any chance? Or has anyone seen him?"

"Colonel Chalmers?" By common consent it was left for Amory to reply. "What do you want with him, Nicholls?"

"I want him because—I say, do you know where he is?" He mopped his hot forehead with a handkerchief. "I've had the very devil of a chase, and a shock, too. But if he's not here——"

He paused for a moment, his keen eyes riveted on Dick Thornley's ghastly face.

"I say, young fellow, what's wrong with you? You look pretty queer—are you ill?"

"No, sir." By a mighty effort Dick pulled himself together and spoke steadily. "But—do you want Colonel Chalmers? He—isn't he at home?"

"No, he isn't." He rapped out the words abruptly. "And I want to find him—quickly. Don't any of you know where he is?"

"No." Amory spoke quietly. "At least—why do you want to find him so badly, doctor? And—why should you expect to find him—here?"

"I want him because—because——" For the first time the doctor appeared to feel something unusual in the atmosphere which enveloped the three men. He looked from one to the other with a suddenly awakened interest; and it did not need his trained psychological sense to realize that all of them had lately passed through some extraordinary emotional crisis which had left its trace in each of the three faces—though it was in

"'Look here!' He spoke shortly. 'I ask you a perfectly simple question, and you all look like a lot of dummies. What's wrong, eh?'"

Dick Thornley's that he read the fullest ravages of an apprehensive dread which was hard to understand.

"Look here." He spoke shortly. "There's something here I don't catch on to. I ask you a perfectly simple question, and you all look like a lot of dummies. What's wrong, eh? Amory, you're a sensible fellow. *Is* there something wrong?"

For a moment even Amory's nerve failed him. He did not know how best to treat the situation; but while he hesitated Ross's quiet voice broke in.

"Perhaps there *is* something wrong, doctor. But first, let us know what is the mystery concerning your desire to find Colonel Chalmers."

The doctor looked round him again, and it was easy to see that he was considering what course of action to pursue. But time was passing; and he made up his mind to speak openly.

"Look here, you fellows, I'll tell you something; but it is to go no farther. I want to find the Colonel because I'm afraid that unless I do there will be a tragedy."

"A tragedy?" Dick Thornley echoed the words in amazement.

"Yes. The facts are these. This morning Colonel Chalmers came to consult me about his health, about which it seems he had been uneasy for some time. To cut a long story short, I found that he was in the grip of an incurable disease, could not live more than a few months at the outside, and would suffer excruciatingly most of the time. I told him the truth—he would have it; and he thanked me quietly and went out. An hour ago I got this note, which by a postscript I find should not have been delivered till to-night."

He brought a crumpled paper out of his pocket and unfolded it.

"In this note he tells me that on thinking matters out he could not bring himself to face the inevitable end, and so he"—the doctor's voice faltered—"he intended to—to take matters into his own hands. He didn't want his daughter to know, of course; so he was going to try to make it appear an accident."

"But—how was he going to do it?" The question was Amory's.

"Shoot himself in the jungle somewhere, to-night."

Through the minds of the listening men flashed the same thought. He had come here, to the bungalow, to rest a while before setting out on the last tragic journey of his gallant life; and here, at the hands of a passionate boy, he had won the release for which he had longed, with no discredit to his own heroic soul.

"And so"—the doctor's voice went on, a little urgently now—"you see how important it is for me to find Colonel Chalmers at once."

There was a silence, during which Amory and Ross, at least, thought hard and furiously. But before either of them could speak, Dick Thornley stepped forward slowly.

"If you want Colonel Chalmers, sir, he is—in there." He pointed to the inner room.

"In there?" The doctor stared at him. "But—what do you mean? If he's there, why doesn't he come——" He stopped suddenly. Then: "Good God, you don't mean to say he's done it already—that I'm too late?"

Between Amory and Ross there passed a look of quick mutual comprehension. Then the latter detained the doctor, who was moving towards the "chick" of beads, with a hand on his arm.

"Wait a minute, doc. Have a drink before you go in. It's been a shock, and you're upset. And you know"—he was filling a glass as he spoke—"there's no hurry—now."

And Dick Thornley, his face like chalk, was hearkening to Amory's whispered instructions.

"Listen, Dick. Go out on to the veranda, and into the room, and put the revolver on the floor by the bed, as though it had dropped. Quickly, mind, and don't bungle." He sank his voice still lower. "Remember, Dick—it's the *second chance*—and it's up to you to make the best of it."

Without a word the boy disappeared on to the veranda; and Amory turned to the others with an explanatory word.

"Thought I heard someone coming. Better wait a second and be sure we're alone."

He paused, as though listening; and as the doctor set down the empty glass Dick re-entered the room through the long door opening on to the veranda.

"No one there." He spoke rather hoarsely, but after all agitation was natural in the circumstances; and Amory turned to Nicholls at once.

"Will you come and see him now? Yes"—he was holding aside the bead curtain and did not look at the other man—"shot himself in there. Like a fool I'd left my revolver out, and I suppose"—he hesitated—"the temptation was too great."

When the doctor and Amory had disappeared, Ross turned to Dick.

"Dick." His voice was solemn. "You have got off well—but for God's sake let this be a lesson to you. Remember, it's only because you swore it was an accident that we're lying like this, to save you."

"I'll not forget, sir." The boy's voice trembled, but Ross was satisfied; and

neither of them spoke again until the doctor and Amory re-entered the room.

"Stone dead, of course, poor chap." Nicholls looked preternaturally grave. "See here, this must be hushed up as much as possible. Luckily it's known his heart was a bit rocky, and there is no need to let out how he died. I will certify that the cause of death was heart failure, consequent on the shock of discovering, suddenly, the seriousness of his condition; and I don't anticipate any difficulty. The only man we must take into our confidence is his own servant, Peters, who's been with him thirty years; and he'll manage everything satisfactorily."

"There's no doubt he did it himself?" Ross asked the question stolidly, and Captain Nicholls looked at him rather sharply.

"No reasonable doubt. The shot was fired at very close quarters, and the revolver was on the ground where it had dropped from his hand. But, of course, if you are not satisfied——"

"But I am." He spoke apologetically. "Forgive me, doc. This has been a bit of a shock to us all, you know. And I am wondering who is to break it to Miss Chalmers."

"To Rosamund, eh?" Nicholls bit his lip. "I'd forgotten the girl. But she mustn't learn the truth. It's bad enough for her to know her father is dead——"

"For God's sake, sir, be quiet!" It was Dick who hissed the words in his ear; and when, startled, Nicholls swung round to face him he understood the speaker's meaning all too plainly.

FOR there, in the doorway leading to the veranda, stood Rosamund Chalmers, and the white gown she wore was not less devoid of colour than was her charming face. For a moment she said nothing, but stood staring at them all with dilated blue eyes and parted lips. Then, as still the silence held, she made one step forward and asked the fatal question which each man dreaded.

"Is my father here? Captain Amory"—it was to him, finally, she appealed—"has Daddy been here this afternoon? I—I'm feeling anxious about him."

He moved towards her and nerved himself to face her bravely.

"Why are you feeling anxious, Miss Chalmers? And why should your father be—here?"

"I'm anxious because he didn't come in to lunch." Her blue eyes roved from one face to another as she spoke, yet came back to rest on Amory in the end. "He saw Captain Nicholls this morning, didn't he?" She appealed to him, but did not wait for a reply.

"And when he came in, for a moment, he said he had had bad news—that he was ill—and he looked so queer, so grey, just as he did when he had a heart attack—and naturally I felt anxious. And when he didn't come in again, I began to wonder——"

She broke off again, as though something in the men's silence struck her as sinister; and turning to Captain Nicholls she questioned him fearfully.

"You thought Daddy was ill, didn't you? But it wasn't—it wasn't he you were talking of as I came in just now?"

"Were we talking of someone?" He did not know how to parry this direct attack.

"Yes. But you said," she put her hand on his arm imploringly, "you said that someone was dead—someone's father. You—you didn't mean *my* father, did you?"

In his silence, in the silence of them all, she read the answer; and for a second she swayed beneath the blow. Then, with the courage which came from a long line of fighting ancestors, she stood erect before the four men and spoke calmly.

"You mean Daddy is dead? But how—when——"

"Colonel Chalmers died—in that room—a couple of hours ago, Miss Chalmers." Amory answered her. "He *had* had bad news about himself, and—you know his heart was weak, that a shock was bound to be disastrous? Well, it was too much for him; and his heart gave out beneath the strain."

Quietly, convincingly, he lied; and the girl accepted his story unquestioningly. Only she turned even paler than before, and her blue eyes filled with a look of dreadful desolation which wrung the hearts of the three men who, each in his own way, loved her.

"Then," her voice was low, "I'm all alone now! But," she turned to Amory, "this is your bungalow, isn't it? And—there will be arrangements to make—may I go in there and see—him?"

"Don't worry about that, Miss Chalmers," he said, quickly. "We will make all the arrangements, and I think—I think you should wait to see your father until we—we bring him home."

"Yes, that will be much the best thing to do," said Nicholls, quickly. "You had better go home now, Miss Chalmers, and one of the ladies of the Station will come and look after you for a bit. How did you get here—you walked, in all this heat?"

"I've got my pony cart here, Miss Chalmers!" It was Dick who spoke, pressing forward, eagerly. "Let me take you home—please!"

He ventured to lay a hand on her arm, but she turned to him gently, with a refusal on her lips.

"No, please, Dick. I—I'd rather go alone. I—I want to be alone!"

"It's getting late, Miss Chalmers." Ross's quiet voice followed her impulsive cry. "I don't think you must go alone. May I take you? The car can be round in a minute."

For a moment she stood among the men, an appealing, sorrowful figure in her white gown; and at the moment even Nicholls, confirmed bachelor though he was, told himself it was small wonder that all the men in the Station were in love with Rosamund Chalmers. He wondered, with a trace of cynicism, which of these three, if any, was the favoured lover; and even as the wonder lingered in his mind he knew the answer to his own unuttered question.

For Rosamund did not heed Captain Ross's offer—did not, or so it seemed, even hear it. It was Amory to whom she turned, with the instinct of the loved one who knows she may call upon her lover; and as her blue eyes sought his face, he started forward as though she had spoken to him.

"I may take you home, Rosamund?" He did not notice his use of her name—a use made familiar to him through his thoughts of her; but the others noted it; and Dick Thornley turned away with a face grown suddenly old.

Into Ross's blue eyes there sprang a look of defeat; but he said nothing, only fumbled mechanically with his cigarette-case; and it was left to Nicholls to break the silence which followed Amory's words.

"Yes, take Miss Chalmers home, Amory." He put his hand on the girl's arm and gently piloted her towards the door. "And I'll ring up Mrs. Farey"—her best friend in the Station—"and ask her to drop in presently."

Without demur Rosamund accepted the position; and although she looked in the direction of the other men, murmured a vague word of farewell, they knew she did not really see them. Only Amory, the man she loved, was real to her in this moment of stress; and Ross, at least, accepted the position with a quiet acquiescence which was not far removed from heroism.

When they had gone, followed down the veranda steps by the doctor, Ross turned

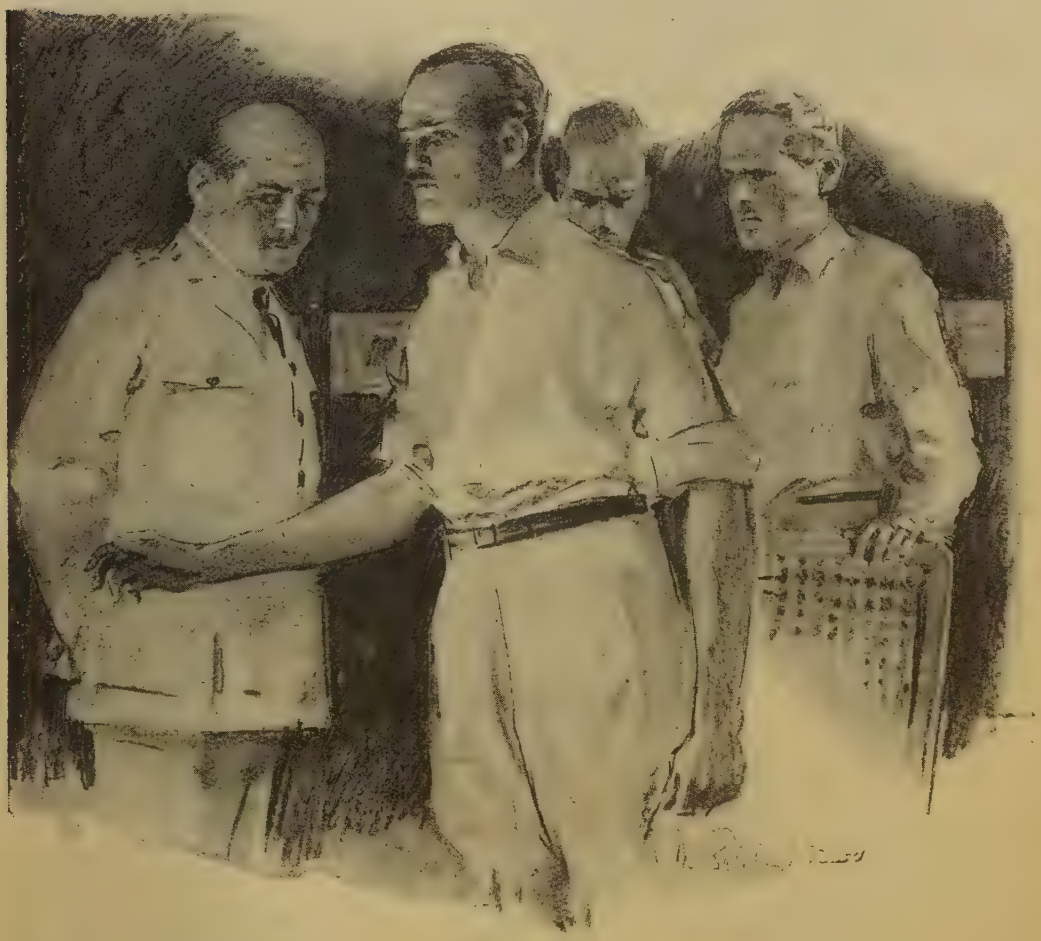
"'I'm anxious because Daddy to wonder——' She broke men's silence struck

slowly to Dick Thornley, who had fallen into a chair and was hiding his face in his hands.

"Dick!" At the tone the boy looked up, and his eyes were haunted. "Remember, you've got to make good—now."

haggard young face there flashed the light of a great resolve.

"By God, Ross, you're right!" There was a ring of hope in his voice. "I'll do it! I'll make good yet!"



didn't come in to lunch. And I began off again, as though something in the her as sinister."

"Make good—me?" He stammered rather than spoke. "But how can *I* make good——?"

"You can, Dick, and you must." Ross's tone was bracing. "God in His mercy has given you a second chance, and it's your part to make the best you can of it."

For a moment the boy said nothing. Then, suddenly, he sprang to his feet, and into his

"See that you do, Dick." Ross put his hand for a second on the other's shoulder. "Remember, few men who do what you have done get the opportunity to make good. But you have got it; and if you're a man at all, Dick Thornley, you'll go home and thank God with all your soul that He has given you a second chance."

And——

"I will," said Dick Thornley, humbly.

IF YOU PLAY—

Tennis, Cricket, Golf, or Croquet,

TAKE THESE TIPS BY EXPERTS AND YOU WILL PLAY BETTER

M. J. G. RITCHIE GIVES A LITTLE ADVICE.

ALTHOUGH practically every Englishman and every Englishwoman plays some game, on which a great amount of time and money is expended, very few ever attain to anything like proficiency. Why? Not from lack of keenness or the desire to succeed, but simply through ignorance of the methods by which their standard of play can be improved. Of actual coaching by professionals the average amateur in this country fights shy for obvious reasons, not unnaturally preferring to learn rather by example than precept. In order, therefore, that devotees of our principal summer games may improve themselves along the right lines, THE STRAND MAGAZINE has induced leading players with world-wide reputations at lawn tennis, cricket, golf, and croquet to advise its readers, in a few pregnant sentences, just how and in what manner they can improve. A careful perusal and close application of the suggestions appearing in the symposium which appears below cannot fail to have the desired effect.

LAWN TENNIS.

M. J. G. RITCHIE.

(Ex-Doubles Champion.)

To the player who wishes to improve at lawn tennis I would suggest a careful consideration of the following "fourteen points":—

(1) Make sure that the foundations, *i.e.*, "grip" of the racket, stance for the various shots, etc., etc., are correct.

(2) Keep your eye on the ball—not the court—when striking.

(3) Learn to put the necessary weight into each stroke at the moment of impact.

(4) In driving swing your racket at the ball; do not "jab."

(5) Follow through.

(6) Keep on your toes, so that a quick and easy move can be made in the direction your opponent has hit the ball.

(7) Keep a good length. (This is most important.)

(8) Learn to "kill" and not pat anything overhead.

(9) Get an old player or pro. to tell you what you do wrong. If necessary, take a few lessons.

(10) Never forget that it takes more like twelve years than twelve lessons to make a player.

(11) Never play with people worse than yourself.

(12) Study the science of the game by watching good players and note how they get their effects.

(13) Enter for as many tournaments as possible. They will welcome you in the handicaps.

(14) Practise! Practise! Practise!

RANDOLPH LYCETT.

(Mixed Doubles Champion of the World on grass and wood.)

One of the first things you are told at golf is "Keep your eye on the ball," and this axiom applies just as much to lawn tennis. Failure to watch the ball closely frequently causes the stroke to be incorrectly timed, with the consequent loss of direction and pace. Accuracy, particularly in a player's early stages, is more to be sought after than hard hitting, which is so often of an erratic character. Young players would be well advised to devote time to developing their backhand shot, as this is usually a very apparent weakness. Much good can be accomplished in this direction by hitting against a wall with a line marked to correspond with the height of the net. Play in as many tournaments as possible and do not let early set-backs dishearten you. The experience gained by meeting players of different styles in competition is invaluable, and leads you to anticipate your opponents' strokes. It is very important to cultivate a good service. The ball should be thrown well into the air and hit whilst the player is stretching up. By tightening the grip of the racket at the moment of impact pace will be imparted to the ball.

JACK HOBBS.

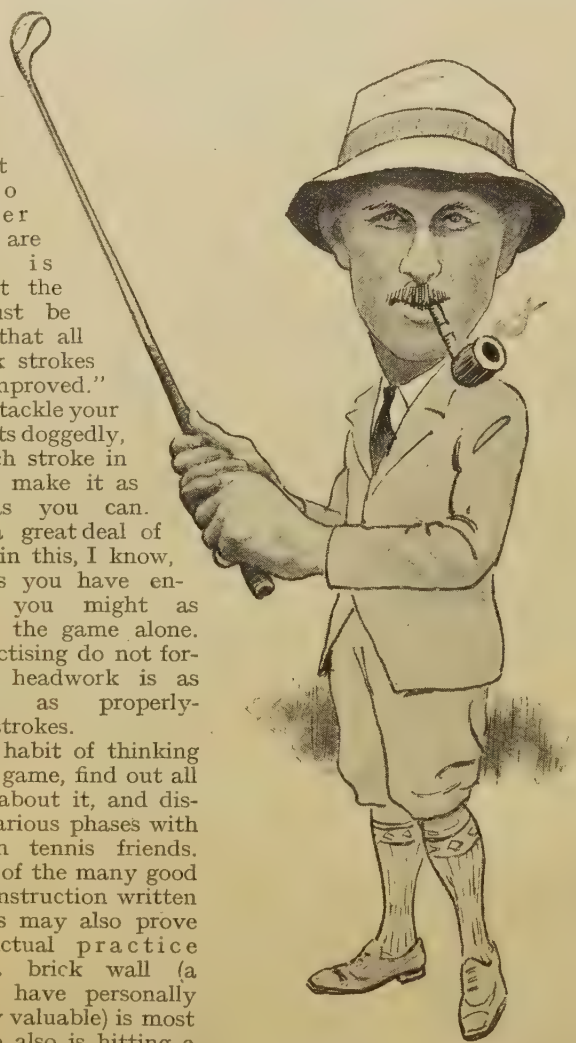
"MUCH CAN BE LEARNT BY WATCHING A FIRST-CLASS BATSMAN."

MRS. LAMBERT CHAMBERS.

(Lady Champion in 1903, 1904, 1906, 1910, 1911, 1913, and 1914.)

I often think that the girl who is anxious to improve at lawn tennis—and we all are—generally goes to work in the wrong way. As I wrote in my book, "the great point to remember when you are practising is not that the game must be won, but that all your weak strokes must be improved." Therefore tackle your weak points doggedly, taking each stroke in turn, and make it as perfect as you can. There is a great deal of drudgery in this, I know, but unless you have enthusiasm you might as well leave the game alone. When practising do not forget that headwork is as important as properly-executed strokes.

Make a habit of thinking about the game, find out all you can about it, and discuss its various phases with your lawn tennis friends. A perusal of the many good books of instruction written by experts may also prove useful. Actual practice against a brick wall (a method I have personally found very valuable) is most helpful, so also is hitting a ball across the net to some friend who will hit or throw it back to you in any required manner. All your weaknesses can be remedied in this way. Tactics, consistency, and endurance come by experience and experience alone.



HARRY VARDON.

"DON'T LET YOUR SHOTS UP TO THE HOLE BE HARD WORK. PLAY THEM WITH CLUBS WHICH WILL ALLOW YOU TO PLAY THEM WITHIN YOURSELF."

CRICKET.

JACK HOBBS.

(The World's Greatest Batsman.)

It is somewhat difficult, I must confess, to advise a batsman how to improve if one does not know the sort of game he plays. Nevertheless, there are a number of fundamental things in batting, the neglect of which often keeps a player back. Very few men, for instance, keep their eye on the ball right up to the moment of impact. This is very important. Then there is the matter of footwork, of which much can be learnt by watching a first-class batsman—in the nets. Footwork and timing are, of course, the whole secret of success at batting. Some players never seem "to get their leg to the ball" at all. Practice in front of a looking-glass can do much to eradicate faults in footwork. Another point: Do not be above asking a better player than yourself for a few hints or a little candid criticism as to faults. Take your strokes one by one and bring them as near perfection as possible. Generally speaking, I advise batsmen to learn to defend their wickets; the strokes will come. When practising, do so on good wickets where you have a chance of learning how to time the ball correctly. When batting in a match remember that it is the "bad one" you want to look for, not the "good 'un." You will get plenty of runs by careful attention to this point. If you are a hitter by nature do not try to stonewall, and when you hit, hit with a straight bat, not across the ball. Bear in mind, also, that bad batting is often the result of a bad bat. Get a good bat from a man who knows what you want.

GOLF.

HARRY VARDON.

(The famous leader of the "old school" in Golf.)

The great majority of the rank and file of golfers would play very much better than they do—some of them perhaps fifty per cent. better—if only they would not persist in making the game so difficult for themselves.

What I mean is this: everywhere one sees amateurs of nearly all grades of ability attempting shots with clubs which are

incapable of securing the required distance unless swung to the full, and with the whole of the player's power. That is why so many efforts go awry.

In the endeavour to invest the shot with every ounce of his strength the player sways, loses his balance, and has no control over either the club or the direction of the ball's flight. Why it is that most golfers have this tendency to underclub themselves, and strain to do with one club what would be simple with another, is one of the little mysteries of the pastime. Possibly it is because they are always longing to be able to say, "I was on this or that green to-day with a drive and an iron."

Time after time when a player could reach a green comfortably with a spoon, and control the shot all the while because of the absence of overswinging, you will see him take a mid-iron and slog for all he is worth.

There is a mistaken impression as to the length of shot which should be attempted with a mashie. You hear a lot of people say: "I love the mashie; I can get one hundred and fifty yards with it." Probably they can sometimes, but in what direction, and how often does the stroke end in a miserable foozle?

You do not find a first-class professional making these mistakes. Of course, a full drive necessitates a full swing—and a great joy it is—but when the professional is playing up to the green, and accuracy of direction is all-important, he takes a club which will enable him to obtain the distance with a half or three-quarter swing. He makes the game easy for himself, and my advice to the player who wants to improve fifty per cent. is: "Whatever you do, don't let your shots up to the hole be hard work. Play them with clubs which will allow you to play them within yourself."

GEORGE DUNCAN.

IT IS A GOLFING AXIOM THAT THE HEAD MUST REMAIN SO MOTIONLESS DURING THE STROKE THAT IF A GLASS FULL OF WATER BE PLACED ON IT NOT A DROP IS SPILT. OUR ARTIST HAS IMAGINED GEORGE DUNCAN PUTTING THIS PRECEPT INTO PRACTICE.

GEORGE DUNCAN.

(One of the best-known of the younger school of golfers.)

When watching the average handicap player at golf, I feel that the first thing he needs to do in order to bring about a big improvement in his game is to introduce a certain element of relaxation into his pose.

I am aware that it is not easy for a person who has taken up the pastime more or less late in life to have that elasticity of body movement and freedom in the joints which are the heritage of the individual who has been playing since early childhood, but there is no reason for the exaggerated stiffness of the body which one sees so often during the address, and which continues during the swing. It ruins the shots, because one simply cannot hope to hit a golf ball far and sure when all the muscles are rigid.

It begins with the grip. The player feels that he must hold the club tightly. That is a certain sign of lack of confidence, and the ordinary golfer does, as a rule, lack confidence. This tightening of the wrist and of the arm muscles in the gripping of the club communicates itself to the rest of the body. No one person can have two degrees of tensity at the same time. The consequence is that he takes the club back in a state of muscular constriction. And who could play golf well in that manner? It means, for certain shots, deficiency in length, and length is the joy for which most golfers strive.

Watch the boy player, the caddie if you like. His wrists are loose, he has a finger-hold of the club—safe but not taut—his body is easy. That is the model. Physical disadvantages may prevent its perfect reproduction, but it

is at least possible to cultivate an unrestrained grip and pose.

In approach shots every first-class player has the toe of the club turned slightly away from the ball—with mashie, mid-iron, even cleek. The ordinary golfer has a definite fancy for placing the face of the club dead square to the line which he hopes to take. Sometimes he pulls to the left; sometimes he sockets to the right. He can improve a lot by adopting this plan of turning the face of the club very slightly away from the ball during the address. It produces the shot that cuts the ball up into the air, and helps it to fly straight.

CROQUET.

By H. F. CROWTHER SMITH.

(Runner-up Croquet Championship, 1919.)

If we wish to improve at any game it is necessary first of all to discover exactly what faults we possess. This is not easy to do by ourselves, and we sigh in vain for the power "to see ourselves as others see us."

It is strange that though in the ordinary daily round of life we resent being told of our shortcomings and imperfections, in the matter of games we not only welcome some "scratch" friend pointing out our faults, but pay experts to do so!

Success at croquet—as in golf—depends very largely on the stability of the stance. I use the word "stance" not merely with reference to the feet, but to include the position of the head, shoulders, upper arm, back, and legs during a stroke.

In my picture of Mr. Duff Mathews, last year's Croquet Champion, I have purposely drawn the figure to emphasize this. Only those parts of the body actually necessary for the making of the stroke—which I call "the working parts"—move.

You will notice that through Mr. Duff Mathews's elbow I have put a bolt. By this I hope to convey to my readers that above this point there is absolute immobility, and that the only movement is made by the lower arms from the elbow, and by the hands from the wrist.

MR. DUFF MATHEWS, Croquet Champion 1919.

ABOVE THE BOLT SHOWN IN THE ELBOW THERE SHOULD BE ABSOLUTE IMMOBILITY OF THE BODY.

Make up your mind what mallet suits you, and what stance suits you. I come across, each year, tournament players who, at the beginning of the season, show me with pride some alteration they have made in the position of their hands or feet. No wonder they never improve.

Having adopted a mallet and stance which you are convinced is entirely comfortable to you, concentrate on ensuring the immobility of everything except the "working parts."

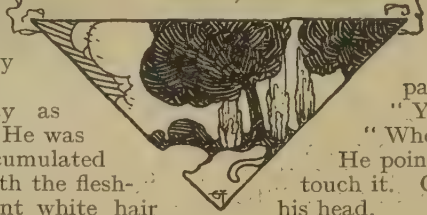
Lifting the head too soon—*i.e.*, before the ball has left the mallet—and raising the shoulders, are two of the most fruitful sources of missing "roquets," and sticking in hoops. And it is the player who hits the long and middle distance shots, and runs the hoops more consistently than his opponent, who wins the game.

My advice in a nutshell is:—Study a steady stance.

The GHOST BOOK

By Clarence Meily

ILLUSTRATED BY E. G. OAKDALE.



I.

THE bright sunlight of an April morning fell through the tall, half-curtained windows directly across Mr. Wombold's breakfast-table, placed just in front of the friendly recess of the bay window. Outside, a rose-garden filled the air with puffs of perfume that drifted lazily through the half-raised sash. The table was set for two, Mr. Wombold having lately formed the practice of breakfasting with his secretary, Miss Armitage. At the master's place lay the morning papers neatly folded by Otu, his manservant.

The room was empty as Mr. Wombold entered. He was a tall man whom accumulated years had bowed, lean with the fleshlessness of age, with scant white hair fringing a high, narrow forehead. Deep-set eyes full of absent brooding, angular features touched upon their bony prominences with a pinkish pallor, a mobile mouth withered by time, all served to fix the impression of a recluse who had not so much renounced the world as wearied of it. He was dressed with care, even daintiness, yet moved with a large, slow gesture as if accustomed and indifferent to the niceties of attire. In his hand he held a volume of Maeterlinck containing studies of some recent experiments in psychic research, which he intended to peruse in the garden after breakfast.

Mr. Wombold seated himself at the table, laid the volume of Maeterlinck to one side, and lifted the newspapers, glancing idly at the head-lines. As he laid aside the last one, he noticed beneath it a small square of cardboard. It was of the shape, size, and texture of the ordinary business-card, and bore in its centre a curious monogram composed of the letters "H" and "F." Nothing else appeared on the card.

Mr. Wombold gazed at it, at first, with the same abstraction and indifference with which he had handled the newspapers; but the card, as if by some subtle and impelling attraction, held his gaze until it gradually focused into alert consciousness. The colour left his face, which sank to the sickly yellow of old ivory.

A moment later, a stertorous intake of air, as if he were regaining his breath by a determined muscular effort, sent the blood surging back into his neck and face. He rose tremblingly, and violently pressed the button of an electric bell set in the wainscoting at his side. Otu answered the summons.

"Who has been in here?" Mr. Wombold demanded, glaring at the Japanese.

"None, sir."

"Where have you been?"

"I am attending the preparing fruit at the kitchen."

"Did you put those newspapers here?"

"Yes, sir."

"Where did that come from?"

He pointed to the card, but did not touch it. Otu examined it, and shook his head.

"I not see it," he said, "I doan' know."

"Where is Miss Armitage?"

"She walk out some lil' time. Back ver' soon, I guess."

Mr. Wombold turned from him with a growl that sent the Japanese scurrying out of the room. He took up the card very gingerly in the fingers of one hand and turned it over. The under side was blank. He carried the card to the buffet, where stood a bronze cigar-holder and ash-tray. He laid it on the tray and, lighting a match, held the burning wood to the cardboard till it was wholly consumed. Then he left the room for the lavatory, where he washed his hands. When he returned, Miss Armitage was in her place at the table.

"Has anyone called here this morning?" Wombold asked, omitting any preliminary greeting.

"No one that I know of."

"I found a—a business-card by my plate. Do you know how it got there?"

Miss Armitage drew her pretty brows into a slight frown of perplexity.

"I am sure I couldn't tell you," she said. "I went out to post the letters you dictated yesterday evening. There has been no one here that I know of."

Mr. Wombold stepped into the recess of the bay window and looked out over the

rose-garden. The sun was warm; the flowers glistened with ardent life; a linnet in one of the rose-trees caroled shrilly. It was a most practical and reassuring scene.

As he came back to the table, Otu began serving breakfast. All the same, a preoccupation so profound settled over Mr. Wombold that he entirely neglected both the food and Miss Armitage's efforts at conversation. Presently he arose, and, leaving the volume of Maeterlinck behind, sauntered out into the garden.

II.

EVEN the full tide of sunlight in which Mr. Wombold stood submerged failed to warm him, or to irradiate the dark flood of recollections that swept in upon him from a remote past. It had been forty years since he had seen that monogram. Time and success, wealth and long undisturbed security, had given to his sense of safety a complete finality. It had taken him some moments even to remember what the thing was.

Now, in miniature imposed by the perspective of the years, as if he looked through a reversed telescope, he saw again the quaint, winding streets of the old village, with their shading elms, their austere, peak-roofed dwellings. He saw the little shop, under its wooden awning, where two young men, playfellows and schoolmates, had bravely started their first business venture as partners. It seemed to him he could still smell, above the odour of the roses, the strange, mingled aromas of that dingy interior—spices from the tropics, salt fish that carried the tang of the ocean, the pungent smell of vinegar, the clean perfume of new linens and calicoes.

It had been a store of general merchandise, and he had been one of its proud proprietors. His name had not been Wombold then. The firm's initials had been fashioned into a monogram, which had come to stand as its distinctive emblem—almost, one might say, its trade-mark. It appeared on its stationery, in its advertising, on the sign over the door. It was one of the many things of which the young partners had been so proud—"H" and "F" combined within a circle, thus :—

Yes, forty years had passed since he had seen it.

But for all their pride and all their gay young confidence, the firm of Hart and Frazier had not prospered. It was hard to say what had been the matter, except that they were too eager, too confident, too daring. They had done much business, they had handled large sums, but they had also accumulated heavy debts. In the end, when failure became inevitable, they had agreed to turn all their assets into cash and pay their creditors *pro rata*, as much as possible. Then they would work together, as common labourers if need be, to settle the balance.

Part of this programme, the liquidation of the assets, had been carried out. Then, one night, Frazier had disappeared, and with him had gone all the firm's money. Hart was left to face utter ruin alone. How he had borne this betrayal, how he had met the disaster, how he had struggled to bear the burden, what life had held for him, whether indeed he had lived or died, the old man meditating in the garden did not know. The night through which he had fled, driven by the mad rebellion of all his youthful hopes against a premature defeat, had never lifted, for him, from that little town which it had engulfed.

Under another name, with the stolen money as his capital, and with the experience gained from failure, in the generous and fruitful West, fortune had come to him. By sheer force of will, later by habit, and at last in very truth, he had forgotten.

And now, like a strange blast of air blown out of some cavernous depth of time, had come this monogram. He shook his chilled frame, both to revive his lagging flow of blood and to dispel the sense of weird unreality that the experience of the morning had brought. His withered lips stiffened into a grim line as he thought of the most probable and practical explanation of the occurrence.

Blackmail, of course! Someone had identified him at last as Frazier, and had taken this clumsy method of rousing his fears. Later, no doubt, the full intrigue would be revealed.

Well, reflected the old man, they would have a merry time trying to intimidate him! He had taken pains, before he fled from Bracksford, to ascertain that a partner who absconds with the firm's assets commits no crime. That was why Hart had been powerless to pursue him, because he had not had the machinery for the apprehension of criminals at his command. As for any civil liability, that was barred long ago by the statute of limitations. Legally, he was immune, and he could laugh at blackmailers.

He clung to this theory of blackmail. There was something human, material, normal, and understandable about it. Flesh and blood men did such things, and could be dealt with in the flesh. He was not too

"'Who has been in here?' Mr. Wombold demanded, glaring at the Japanese. 'None, sir.'"

old to do battle with opponents who could be seen and felt and pointed out. They merely roused his courage and stimulated his dormant energies.

The other alternative he refused to consider, though it was that, he knew, which made the heat of the sun so oddly ineffectual. He had dabbled too much in the preternatural, and had cultivated too far a mystical attitude of mind, to be oblivious to the occult implications of the incident. Such ideas, he realized, grew on one imperceptibly.

He was sorry now that Miss Armitage had pointed his attention in the direction of spiritualism and psychic phenomena, though when the suggestion was made, in the period of ennui following his retirement from business, he had welcomed it rather gladly. He was sorry, too, that he had burned the mysterious card. It would have been better to preserve it, not only as a clue, but as a demonstration of normality. As it was, he had only memory and these dubious, fantastic conceptions that fascinated and appalled him. He wondered whether Hart was dead.

III.

IT was several days later that Mr. Wombold, returning from an afternoon motor ride, found Miss Armitage at her desk in the library fingering a significant slip of cardboard.

"A man called to see you while you were out," said the secretary.

Mr. Wombold glanced at the card she held out, but made no move to take it. He received the announcement without any visible sign of emotion, merely seating himself heavily and for a moment staring in silence at the wall.

"What kind of a man was he?" he asked, when he had mastered the contraction in his throat.

"Why, he was not a large man—rather slightly built, perhaps about thirty-five. He had brown hair and eyes, but he was somewhat grey, and had a kind of worried look. He is hard to describe exactly—rather odd-looking."

"How was he odd?"

Wombold put the question harshly, in a tone that grated with sharp insistence. The puzzled frown on Miss Armitage's forehead deepened.

"Why, he was dressed rather queerly, for one thing, as if his clothes had been laid away for thirty years or more. I noticed he wore one of those old-fashioned stiff white shirts, and he had a queer collar and tie. His coat was long, and his trousers weren't creased, but ironed smooth all round, and he had a low-crowned felt hat and buttoned shoes. He was pervaded by a general air of antiquity, one might say."

Wombold was leaning forward with his fists knotted on the arms of his chair. His deep, brooding eyes burned upon the girl's face.

"I told him you were out for a ride," she went on, "and he asked if your carriage would be long. I said I thought you would be back in an hour, so he left this card——"

"Did he have a beard?" the old man interrupted chokingly, his face suddenly gone grey.

"Yes, a short brown beard. Why, Mr. Wombold?"

Mr. Wombold had fallen back into the depths of the chair, with one whispered syllable that the girl did not understand. His ashen cheeks stood out in high relief against the dark upholstery. Miss Armitage sprang to his side.

"Your heart? Mr. Wombold, did you say it was your heart? Oh, Mr. Wombold, are you ill?"

He opened his eyes and regarded her strickenly, with the dumb reproach of one who has received dreadful tidings. Presently the lifetime habit of combat reasserted itself, and courage and resolution dawned in his gaze.

"Better in a moment," he whispered. "Don't leave me. The card!"

Miss Armitage lifted it from the desk where she had dropped it, and held it out.

"Keep it!" he ordered. "I am not yet convinced. It may be a trick. I am going to know. Help me to the couch."

After two days of troubled cogitation, during which he had steadied his nerves by the exercise of that steadfast will which served him in lieu of physical strength, Mr. Wombold fixed upon two methods of investigation, the one material, the other psychic. One or the other of them, he felt, should disclose the nature of the forces that menaced him.

To carry out the first, he employed a well-known detective agency, instructing the superintendent to ascertain the origin of the last card received, and the identity of the person who had presented it. He waited for a report before resorting to the second line of inquiry.

The report, when it came, proved baffling. As far as the mysterious caller who had appeared before Miss Armitage was concerned, absolutely no trace of him could be discovered. No individual answering his description had been seen in the neighbourhood of the Wombold residence, nor could any such person be found at any of the city's hotels or principal lodging-houses. The oddity of his aspect made this complete disappearance the more inexplicable.

As to the card, the report was less definite. The monogram, it seemed, was not so unique

as Wombold had supposed. Two or three firms in the city having the initials "H" and "F" had used it, or something resembling it, and various job-printing houses had supplied stationery containing it. None, however, recalled printing cards bearing nothing else, and several printers were positive that the cardboard was of a stock which had not been in use or on the market for a number of years.

In short, the search of the detectives had ended against a blank wall. With a sickening apprehension, Wombold turned to his alternative line of research.

"Make an appointment with Mme. Charleroi for to-morrow afternoon," he told Miss Armitage.

The *séance* was held in Mr. Wombold's library, none being present but himself and the medium. The blinds were drawn to half length, filling the room with a mellow, golden gloom.

Mme. Charleroi, a small, stout woman, garbed in black, and with the flat features, high cheek-bones, and neutral complexion of the Baltic littoral, was a noted psychic, enjoying an exclusive clientele among the well-to-do and far removed from the common class of irresponsible charlatans. The aged magnate had consulted her often in recent years, not infrequently with remarkable results.

The two confronted each other now in an accustomed comradeship, the medium impassive, Wombold under a severely repressed strain that showed in his intent eyes and the slight, nervous movements of his lips and hands.

"Tell me what comes to you," he said. "Allow a free flow of suggestion from across the border."

Mme. Charleroi leaned back and closed her eyes. She was motionless for ten or fifteen minutes, during which a slightly increased paleness and regular breathing denoted the heightening of psychic susceptibility. Wombold's gaze never left her face as he waited tensely the result of the experiment. At last the medium's lips moved, and as he leaned forward he could catch a faint form of words :—

'I see—darkness!"

There was another pause, and then Wombold commanded, sternly :—

"Yes. Go forward! Try to pierce the darkness!"

An expression of pity and pain gradually came upon Mme. Charleroi's sleeping countenance.

"A wrong, very great and very old," she whispered. "There is someone to communicate with you—a troubled spirit. He speaks the name of Henry Hart."

The listener gasped.

"Go on!" he stammered.

Suddenly the quality of Mme. Charleroi's voice changed. It assumed a masculine ring, genial and cheery, yet with a note of reproach in it.

"George, you remember that mortgage I put on my house to meet the Macey Woollen Company's bill, don't you? George, they're going to foreclose that mortgage. I can't meet everything, and if I lose my home there'll be nothing for my family but beggary. I'm trying to see you ——"

"Henry, have mercy!"

Wombold's stifled cry broke the thread of the medium's monologue. Mme. Charleroi's body was wrenched violently to one side, and she opened her eyes.

"What's the matter?" she demanded. "You hurt me!"

Wombold sat staring at her in a paroxysm of fear.

"Did anything happen?" repeated the medium.

He made no answer, but continued to stare as if her presence was blotted out for him by his own fearful fancies. Mme. Charleroi rose and rang the bell. Miss Armitage answered it.

"You'd better look after him," the medium said to her. "He's had a shock."

IV.

IT was three days before Wombold left his bed, and when he reappeared it was as if five or six years had elapsed, so much older and more broken did he appear. He seemed to have become a haunted man. Never for a moment would he consent to be left alone. If Miss Armitage could not be with him, Otu must be. At night the Japanese servant slept in his employer's bedroom, where he maintained at least a nominal watch.

Mr. Wombold had now definitely surrendered the idea of any human agency as responsible for the phenomena he had experienced. His preoccupation with spiritualism deepened, and his studies became more absorbing, though he no longer resorted to Mme. Charleroi or even permitted her to be mentioned. He still employed the detective agency, however, directing it to make discreet inquiry as to Henry Hart's relatives and their history. He learned in this way that Hart's widow still lived in Bracksford, and that the family had finally, after years of hardship, settled the last of the claims against the old partnership, though not until anxiety and stress had cost the life of Hart himself while still in his early manhood.

But though convinced of the supernatural character of the manifestations that had terrified him, and at heart sceptical of the precautions he had devised against their

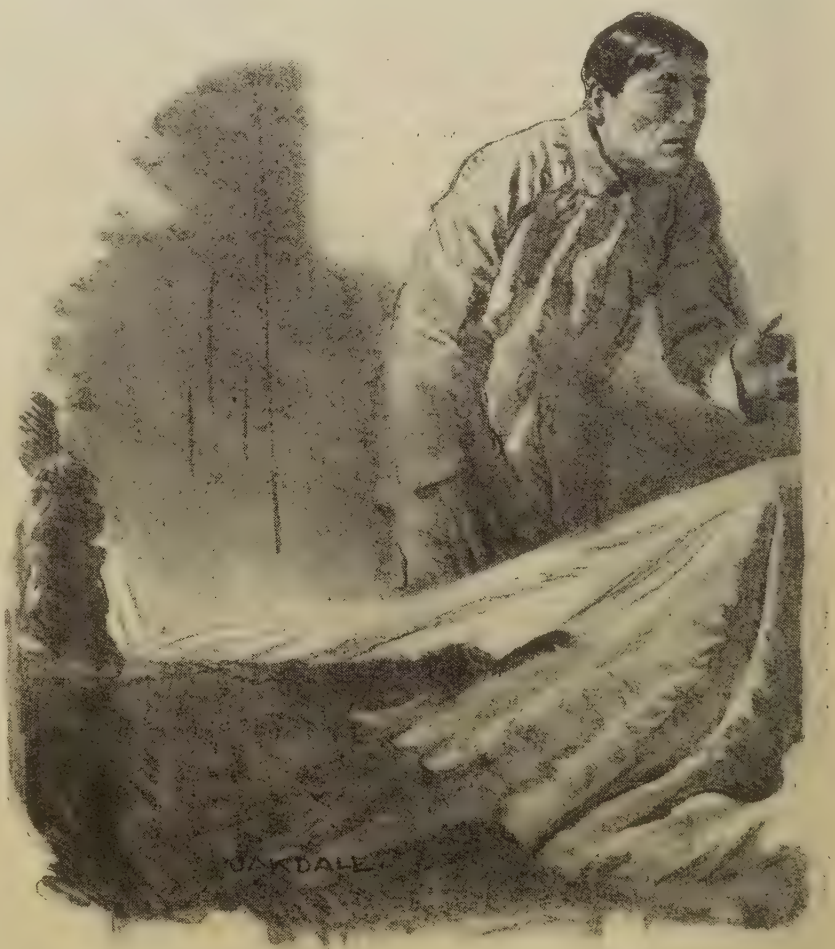
repetition, and though the power of reparation was his and the duty acknowledged by his own conscience, Wombold did nothing more towards satisfying his ancient debt. He seemed to await some further direction, some additional constraint, which should make restitution inescapable. It came soon enough, and in a manner entirely adequate.

Since the sitting with Mme. Charleroi, Wombold's sleep had been fitful and dream-laden — owing in part, perhaps, to the freer and more nutritious diet solicitously urged on him by Miss Armitage, coupled with a lack of his usual exercise. In his somnolent brain visions of a far-off boyhood mingled with broken images of present surroundings, as if two distinct personalities, each with its own distinct memory, struggled for dominance. He would wake suddenly from these confused fantasies into a painfully vivid consciousness in which every sense was strung to abnormal expectancy. Only by the severest self-discipline could he quiet himself again to slumber.

He woke thus one night, about the spectral hour of two in the morning, with the distressing intuition of an alien presence in the room. He listened, but could hear nothing more than his own panting breath.

By the dim glow of the night-lamp he could make out the recumbent figure of Otu on a cot at the other side of the room. The sight of the Japanese, and of the vague shapes of familiar articles in the room, reassured him. He could neither see nor hear anything to justify his alarm, and presently, with practised self-control, he recomposed himself to sleep.

Some time later his dreams, which had flowed through his mind in the usual incongruous jumble of sense images, resolved themselves into the definite impression of burial. He seemed to lie entombed, a mass of earth or stone pressing down upon him with an intolerable yet hopeless weight.



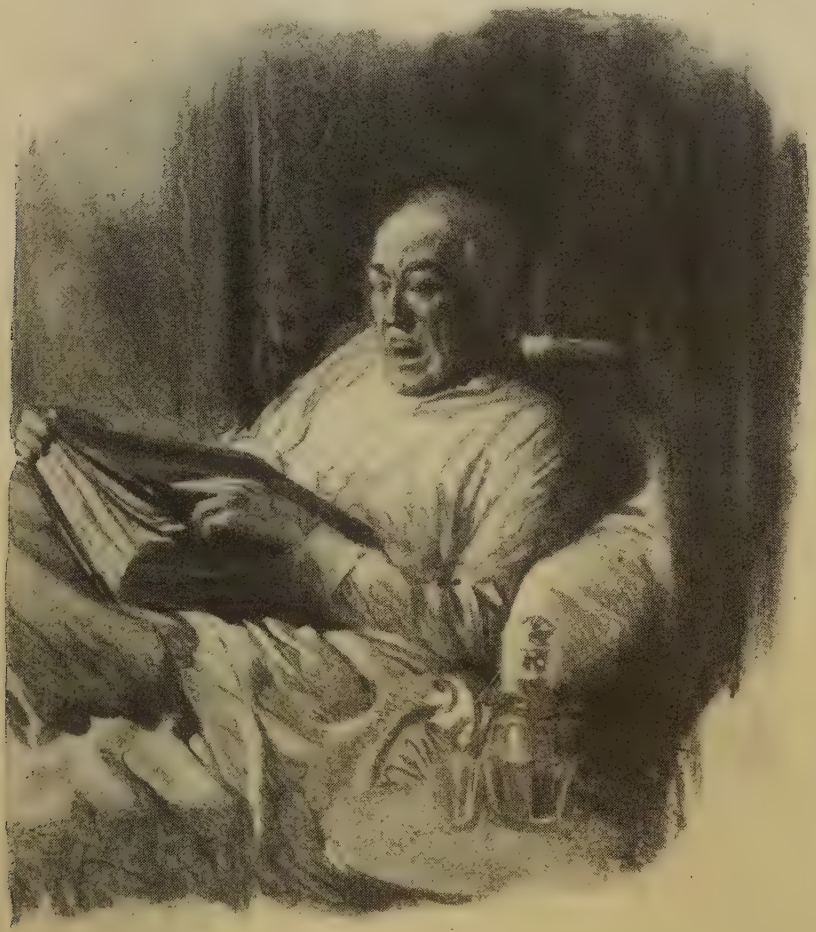
"In an access of terror, he sprang to a sitting posture with a shriek.

As his consciousness rose to the waking plane, this impression took on the poignant reality that constitutes a nightmare. He strove to cry out, to move, to escape. He groped wildly with his hands, which encountered a heavy object lying on his breast.

In an access of terror, he sprang to a sitting posture with a shriek. The thing slipped to his lap and lay there, massive, hard, ponderous. His hands explored its angular outline as he screamed again. In

an instant Otu was by his side and had switched on the electric lights.

Fairly awake, but trembling with fright, Wombold hastily examined the object that lay in his lap. It was a large business ledger, musty, worn, and stained with time. Stamped upon its mildewed cover was the infernal monogram.



His hands explored the book's angular outline as he screamed again.'

In a trance of fear, Wombold opened its yellowed leaves. His own handwriting stared up at him out of the ghostly past, over a guilt-haunted hiatus of forty years. With a thick sigh, the old man fell back upon his pillow in a dead faint.

Almost as frightened as his master, Otu ran into the hall crying out for help. He was met almost instantly by Miss Armitage, who pressed by him into the room.

"Call the housekeeper! Get some hot water!" she ordered, as she saw Wombold's white face against the pillows.

Otu ran to obey. In a few moments he returned with Mrs. Crane, the housekeeper, followed by one of the maids with a jug of hot water.

Miss Armitage's vigorous measures were already restoring a semblance of animation to the master's bloodless visage. His hands stirred feebly, and presently he opened his eyes. Mrs. Crane, who had mixed a stiff dose of whisky and hot water, brought it to the bedside, and Wombold revived under the potion; but with restored consciousness his nervous terror also began to return. He caught Miss Armitage's hand.

"Where is it?" he begged. "Where is the book?"

The girl shook her head.

"Don't think of it now," she said. "Don't think of anything till morning."

"But I must think of it!" he cried. "What was it? Where has it gone? Was it the ghost of a book? Didn't you see it?" He turned to Otu.

"Sure, I see," agreed the Japanese.

But by this time Wombold was babbling feverishly, paying little attention to those about him.

"Do things like that have their astral counterparts? I saw it. I felt it in my hands. Am I to be drawn back into past time where all these dead and gone things are assembled? Shall I see him there? Oh, Henry, have a little pity on me! I'll send it, Henry. I'll pay it back—every penny, with interest. Now! Now! Get Carrington! Get him on the telephone! I must send it to-night. Oh, let me alone!"

He shook off the restraining hands of the women, and would have left his bed for the

telephone below stairs, if, to quiet him, they had not promised to call his lawyer.

After some difficulty Miss Armitage succeeded in arousing Mr. Carrington, and induced him to come to the Wombold residence at once. By the morning a cheque for seven thousand pounds, the amount of the original defalcation with interest added, was on its way to the little town, enclosed in a registered letter addressed to Henry Hart's widow.

V.

IN the sunny library Miss Clara Armitage was engaged in clearing out the drawers of her typewriter-desk. She was softly humming a gay little tune, bright as the sunlight itself, and on her face was a queer little smile, half-amused, half-wistful, such as that with which sympathetic grown-ups regard the tragedies of childhood.

From the deepest recess of the bottom drawer she drew out a small package of cards, of the size and general character of business-cards, but having nothing printed on them except a circle enclosing a monogram composed of the letters "H" and "F." She ran these thoughtfully through her fingers for a moment, then slipped them into her pocket, went out into the hall, and mounted the stairs. On the floor above she knocked at Mr. Wombold's bedroom door. There being no audible reply, she entered.

Mr. Wombold lay in an easy chair before the window. He looked as if he were just emerging from a grave illness. His skin had exchanged its wonted healthy pallor for a tissue-like fragility, his great eyes seemed unusually sunken in his emaciated features, and he was wrapped in a listless apathy such as belongs to the period of early convalescence.

Miss Armitage came forward and took a seat by his side. He regarded her vacantly, without change of expression.

"Mr. Wombold," she said, "I am going away. I have come to say good-bye."

"Good-bye?"

"Yes. I am going back to my home in the North."

"What for?"

"I—I am going to be married," Miss Armitage confessed with a blush.

The old man sighed.

"It goes on," he said, "just the same, doesn't it? Life, that is—it goes on and on till the end."

"Mr. Wombold," cried the girl, "I can't bring myself to go away and leave you in this condition, a prey to all these superstitious fears. You have been very good to me, and I want to talk to you a little. Won't you listen?"

He acquiesced with a listless dropping of the eyelids.

"Do you remember six years ago," she went on, "when I applied at your bank for work? I had just come from the country. I had come on purpose to find you, Mr. Wombold."

Wombold glanced at her with a vague interest.

"Find me?" he repeated.

"Yes. When you gave me a place, I tried from the first to make myself so efficient that you would make me your private secretary. When you did that, I worked harder than ever, hoping to make myself so indispensable that you would always keep me with you. I succeeded in that, as you know. By the time you retired from business, three years ago, I had my plans all laid. I knew from little things I'd seen, like not starting anything on Friday, and avoiding the number thirteen, and so on, that you were superstitious. So I got you into the way of studying occultism and spiritualism. I was so sure of my plans that I even had these cards printed then."

She held up the package of cards. Wombold's colour had come back, and his eyes took on some of their old-time brilliance as he stared wonderingly at her.

"You had them printed—those cards? What for?"

"For my plan. But, tell me first, even if nothing mysterious had happened to induce you to pay back the money, wouldn't you still be glad you did it?"

"Yes," he said strongly. "It should have been done long ago. I have wished to do it, but I was held back by my pride, by the shame of confession——"

"I know," she hastily interrupted. "I thought that was it. And now I want you to know that it was I who placed one of these cards by your breakfast-plate last April. The story of the man who called to see you and left one of them was just a fabrication on my part. There wasn't any such man."

"But Mme. Charleroi?" he objected, in dazed amazement.

"She gets her percentage of the seven thousand, never fear. It may be betraying her to tell you so, but I think you ought to know. As for that old ledger, I had it sent to me from home. It was I who came in and put it on your chest that night."

"You!" he cried. "In mercy's name, who are you?"

Her merry laugh had nevertheless a trace of tears in it as she caught his hand and answered:—

"My dear old friend, I am the granddaughter of Henry Hart!"

The LITTLE PATIENT

From the French of

G. COURTELINE

THE DOCTOR (*at the front door*) : Is this the house, madam, where the little boy is ill ?

MADAM : Yes, doctor. Come in, please. It is my little boy. Just fancy, ever since this morning, poor little dear, he has done nothing but tumble down.

DOCTOR : Tumble down !

MADAM : All day long. Yes, doctor.

DOCTOR : On the floor ?

MADAM : On the floor.

DOCTOR : Very strange ! How old is he ?

MADAM : Four and a half.

DOCTOR : He ought to stand up well enough at that age. How did this come on ?

MADAM : I really don't know, doctor. He was quite all right last night, and playing about the room like a monkey. This morning I dressed him as usual. I put on his stockings, his blouse, and his knickerbockers, and set him on his feet. Down he tumbled !

DOCTOR : Perhaps he slipped.

MADAM : Wait ! I picked him up, but down he went again. It happened six or eight times following. I was simply amazed. As I told you, ever since the morning he has done nothing but tumble down.

DOCTOR : Marvellous ! Well, I'd better have a look at him.

MADAM : Oh, yes, do ! I'll bring him down. (*She goes out ; then reappears carrying the little boy. He is rosy and fat with perfect health. He is dressed in a long, loose blouse, decked with dry smears of "sweeties."*)

DOCTOR : Why, he looks splendid. Put him down, please. (*The mother obeys. The child tumbles down on the floor.*)

DOCTOR : I never heard of such a thing in my life ! (*To the little boy, whom his mother is holding up under his arms*) : Now, tell me, my little friend, do you feel in pain anywhere ?

TOTO : No, sir.

DOCTOR : No ache in your head ?

TOTO : No, sir.

DOCTOR : You slept like a top last night ?

TOTO : Yes, sir.

DOCTOR : Just so. (*He turns to the mother and speaks with the air of a man who knows all about it.*) It is a case of paralysis.

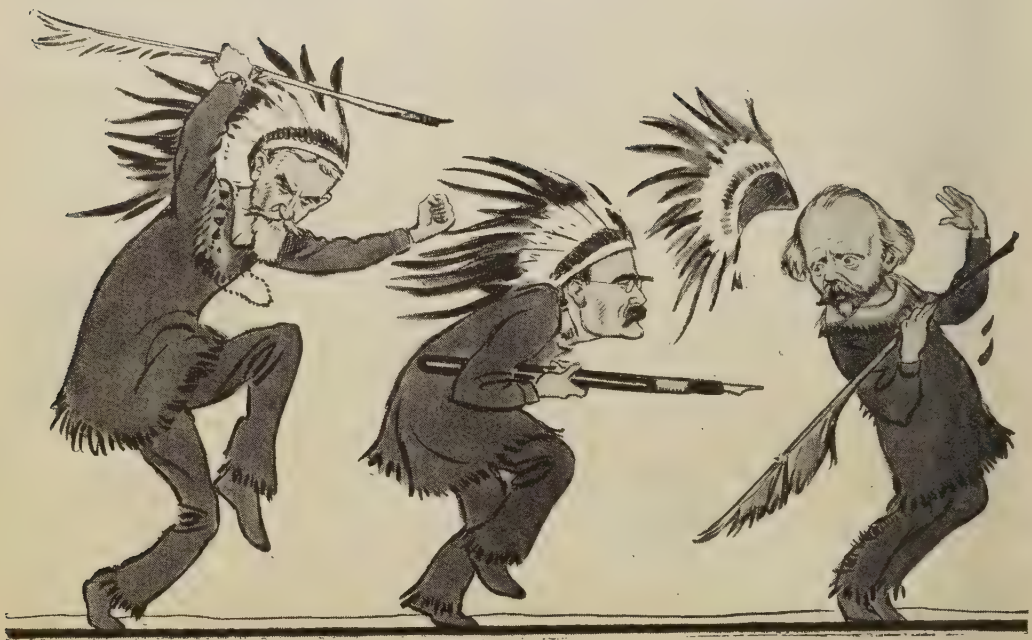
MADAM : Para—— ! Good gracious ! (*She raises her arms—the child tumbles down again.*)

DOCTOR : I am sorry to have to say so. Yes, madam, complete paralysis of the lower limbs. You can see for yourself that the little boy's flesh has lost all sense of feeling. (*As he speaks he approaches the patient and prepares to make his experiment. Then, all of a sudden, as he pulls up the little boy's blouse, he recoils in amazement.*)

DOCTOR : What's this ? What's this ? What's this ? Good heavens, madam, what's all this nonsense of yours about paralysis ?

MADAM : But, doctor——

DOCTOR : Tumble down ! What do you expect when you put both his legs in the same leg of his knickerbockers !



WRITERS ON THE WAR-PATH

By E. T. RAYMOND

Author of "Uncensored Celebrities," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY
WILTON WILLIAMS

IT is said that King Edward's tailor once referred to the society at Margate as a "mixed lot," on which the King remarked that he could hardly expect a watering-place which solely entertained tailors. The indictment and the defence might equally apply to the men of letters of to-day. They are certainly a mixed lot, and it is just as well that they should be; it takes all kinds to make the smallest of worlds. But, however various in other respects, our writers have one quality in common—an inexhaustible and almost ferocious pugnacity. They are fighters almost to a man, and even to a woman, for the spirit of controversy knows no sex frontier; compare Miss Marie Corelli with Mrs. Hemans, and you realize the full force of the tendency which urges everybody who has the ear of the public to scream into it with shrill purposefulness.

Whence comes this widespread combativeness? I will not attempt to determine. Possibly it is only one manifestation of the general tendency to kick and scratch which brought about the great war—and even now makes getting an omnibus seat so painful a labour. Perhaps it is a specially literary reaction against the flabbiness of the "art for art's sake" period. But, whatever the origins, the fact itself admits of no doubt. The gentlest writers of the day have, as regards public questions, an imperious and defying style, "a style for challengers, like Turk to Christian." Mr. de Vere Stacpoole, who writes novels so full of the peace of his own blue lagoons, attacks certain controversial matters with something of the fury of the breakers beyond the coral reef of his Pacific isle. Mr. Maurice Hewlett, so pleasant a romancer within book covers, goes over the argumentative top with Berserk fury. Mr. Galsworthy, with a pity embracing the whole human race, and enough left over to go round all the world of dicky-birds, can still be a nasty opponent in a newspaper

column. Mr. Charles Whibley is all "gas and gaiters" in dealing with the dead, but nobody has a sharper scalping-knife for the living. Sir Hall Caine and Mr. Jerome K. Jerome are often on the war-path, and it is possible that Mr. W. W. Jacobs will some day emerge as a chastiser.

The fashion, I think, began with Mr. Rudyard Kipling. At any rate Mr. Kipling's arrival synchronized with the decline and fall of the school whose main tenet was that "nothing matters but art." Looking back at the late 'eighties, I seem to see two representative figures. One is that of a fattish but not inelegant figure, a well-groomed porpoise of a man, lolling on a sofa, and (between the whiffs of a scented cigarette) propounding in carefully considered impromptus the thesis that all that is popular is vulgar, and that literature has nothing whatever to do with morals. The other is that of a black-browed little gamin, in spectacles, setting light to a cracker which will make the æsthete jump. Oscar Wilde compassed his own personal destruction, but it was Mr. Kipling who, talking with *Punch* about things that mattered, struck dead as mutton the Oscar Wilde school of "art for art's sake." Cecil Rhodes called Kipling "the only live poet" England ever had; and he was not only "live" himself but the cause of "liveness" in other men. Mr. Kipling, especially in his young days, was one of those people about whom it is impossible to be neutral; you either liked him to extremity or you did not like him at all. Even in his private affairs he experienced no mean between passionate hero-worship and emphatic disagreement. On his American and Canadian tours he evoked more enthusiasm than most crowned heads; yet his triumphant progresses were punctuated by quarrels with hotel-keepers. On leaving one place he wrote, "I just want to say that of all the hotels under the shining sun I have never been in one that for unmitigated, all-round, unendurable discomfort could equal yours." This was drastic enough; but the last word was not with Mr. Kipling. When the bill was rendered a few minutes later the concluding item read:—

"To impudence, three dollars."

So decided an element was bound to affect the whole moral chemistry of the time, and Mr. Kipling must be thanked, not only for the works of his own vehement genius, but for many other things which he called into being, or to which, at any rate, he gave definition and direction. Thus I always think of Mr. Kipling as the spiritual parent of Mr. Gilbert Keith Chesterton. Parent, of course, in the sense that the insect is the parent of the oak-apple; it stings the oak and raises a lump which grows apart and hardens into permanency and quite complicated organization. Mr. Kipling stung Mr. Chesterton when a very young man, and raised a very big lump indeed; it will always be one of the curiosities, and may well be reckoned some day among the treasures, of British literature. The more emphatically Mr. Kipling preached Empire, the more decisively

Mr. Chesterton embraced the parish pump, though, despite all his loyalty to that institution, he has never looked with favour on its peculiar product. The more Mr. Kipling quoted Medicine Hat and Wagga Wagga, the more intensely did Mr. Chesterton turn to the glories of "the town of Roundabout." The more Mr. Kipling rhapsodized over modernism, the more Mr. Chesterton became convinced that reason and liberty shrieked when the monasteries fell, and that there has really been no life worth living since the Middle Ages.

Many things might have slept, indeed, but for Mr. Kipling's strident note of challenge, and among them the combativeness of "the Wild Knight." For I cannot help thinking that, but for some stimulus of the kind, so "enormously lazy" a man (it is his own description) as Mr. Chesterton would have been well content with the things that don't matter—or that do (it is purely a question of private judgment): I mean art, Shakespeare, and the musical glasses. Mr. Chesterton was really made for a battle of wits at the Mermaid tavern, or such modern equivalent as we might get for it. With a due Boswell he would make a capital second edition of Johnson; one feels that it is his business to talk about man as man, and not about the small sub-section of the species known as politicians. His very breadth—for his mind is well suited to the vast frame which, inadequately sheltered by a hansom cab, used to be one of the sights of Fleet Street—makes for narrowness, in the contentions of the moment.

For though Mr. Chesterton loves, as I have said, the parish pump, he abhors those who drink from it and those who would use it to wash other people. The social reformer who would take away the people's beer is to him just as hateful, but not more so, as the social reformer who would abolish the people's dirt. He hates cocoa, and has written a passionate poem denouncing it as a cad and coward and a greasy slave. He hates millionaires, especially those who build model villages and emit moral maxims.

He hates—no, he does not hate; he is always most particular in explaining that he does not hate; but he says very severe things about Jews, whom (though otherwise a humane man) he would send to Palestine. He has no great love for Nonconformists. His own religious leanings are a little obscure; perhaps they were best described by the wit who said he sat on the steps of a Roman Catholic church telling people what a capital place it was inside. He does not like members of Parliament in general, and he dislikes Ministers in particular. He is roused to fury by those who want cheap divorce and more policewomen. He detests especially doctors and other people who go about telling working-class mothers how to look after their children.

Now all these particular aversions, crossing as they do all the border-lines of social controversy, do give a certain narrowness, as well as a certain whimsicality, to Mr. Chesterton's onslaught on things as they are. He is all for Jack the Giant Killer until that hero (thirsty after his sixth or seventh encounter) refreshes himself with ginger-ale. Then we are astonished to be told (quite suddenly) that Jack is in secret collusion with the giants, and that it is quite a mistake to believe that any of them is really dead.

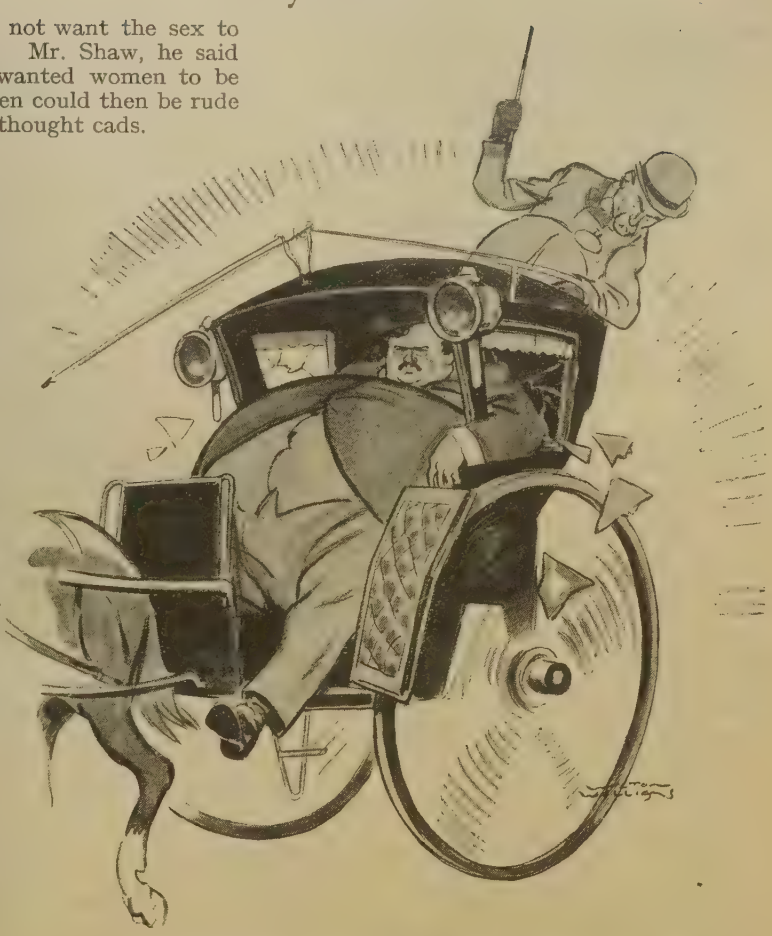
MR. CHESTERTON finds pleasure in fighting against odds. That kind of fighting only is admirable. During the Boer War he founded a Patriots' Club; like the little girl's family, the patriots were seven. "G. K." at least resembled one brother of the Wordsworthian heroine: he was in the very heaven of the combative; a hope must be very forlorn indeed before he enjoys leading it. His journalistic time brought him in contact with men who represented all his pet antipathies. One—a distinguished teetotaller—once complimented him on the unvarying brilliancy of his articles. "How do you do it?" he asked. "Well, you see," said Mr. Chesterton, "I go and get some beer; then I get some more beer; then I get quite a lot of beer; and then, when I have had nearly as much beer as I want I sit down and it comes." The conversation was quickly changed.

Mr. Chesterton has been a Liberal and a Socialist, and is consequently never happier than when fighting either, or both together. His sword-play, astonishingly agile for such a Porthos, gives him great joy; he has been seen under a lamp in Fleet Street reading proofs of one of his own articles and gurgling with pleasure. It is only fair to say that the pleasure is very widely shared; a new Chesterton book is the event of the season to many people, while among his personal following everything belonging to him is sacred. Though he hits hard, there is the soul of good humour in his writings, and there could not be a more thick-and-thin friend; he is chivalrously ready to cover the retreat of any worsted comrade, and many of his followers, less resourceful than himself, are apt to get worsted in using his weapons.

Chivalry is, indeed, Mr. Chesterton's strong point; was it not said that he gave up his seat in an omnibus to "three ladies"? It was chivalry that made him oppose the

woman's vote; he did not want the sex to make itself ridiculous. Mr. Shaw, he said on one occasion, only wanted women to be enfranchised because men could then be rude to them without being thought cads.

CLOSELY associated with Mr. Chesterton is a sterner figure. Mr. Hilaire Belloc is with him in many things; he, too, would fain back to the Middle Ages; as to Roman Catholicism, he goes farther than the steps of the Oratory; he carries the literary cult of beer to still greater lengths; he has more than Mr. Chesterton's nose for a Jew; he thinks still more meanly of our public institutions and public men; he is yet more convinced that this country is heading straight for slavery, if it has not already got there. But Mr. Belloc, with his partly French blood, his military training, his emphatic and dictatorial character, and his over-logical mind, is, if not a more hearty fighter, at any rate a less good-humoured one.



"Mr. Chesterton, inadequately sheltered by a hansom cab, used to be one of the sights of Fleet Street."

Mr. Belloc has a knack of saying wounding things in the most wounding way. Even in his nonsense-verses there is almost always some little venom clinging to the point. His political satires and denunciations are downright inhuman, and occasionally might be called rude if one did not understand that French side of him which will allow of as little compromise with an adversary as with an idea. Mr. Belloc's ideas being very numerous, it follows in such circumstances that those he deems enemies are not few, and it is rather remarkable that during all these years his friendship for Mr. Chesterton, so totally unlike him in character, has remained constant. But there is another Belloc besides the political bravo, a creature of gallant song and healthy fancy, the lover of the open road and the cosy inn, and when common feeling for such things have joined these twain what man or thing shall put them asunder?

Of totally different kind are two other swashbucklers of the printed page. If Mr. Kipling makes play with a cunning Eastern scimitar, if Mr. Chesterton uses a great claymore, which he swings with the ease of a walking-stick, if Mr. Belloc's weapon is the straight Roman blade of logic tempered and sharpened with fanaticism, the methods of Mr. Bernard Shaw and Mr. H. G. Wells are those of the newer warfare of chemistry. Mr. Shaw fights with acids and gases. His method resembles that by which the miner extracts gold from quartz. Here is a seemingly obdurate block of matter, capable of blunting any cutting instrument used on it. But after some chemical preparation has been spirted against it for a certain time the quartz begins to get spongy, it disintegrates, and finally it can be crumbled to pieces between the fingers. It is an intellectual solvent of this kind that Mr. Shaw applies to anything he wants to attack: things great and solid, like orthodox literature, the

Church, the public schools, the institutions of war and diplomacy, and society itself. He does not denounce what he considers to be an evil; he simply labours to make it ridiculous as well as hateful. The Churchman, opposing divorce, felt that he had said the last word when he remarked that marriages were made in Heaven, and declared that whom God hath joined no man might put asunder. Mr. Shaw, through the mouth of an extremely typical bishop, suggested that it was not God, but only Mr. Simpkins, late an undistinguished undergraduate of Keble, not specially remarkable for either piety or learning, who did the joinery.

THE Anti-Socialist, as Mr. Chesterton has pointed out, said, coolly, "Our system may not be a perfect system, but it works." Bernard Shaw replied, even more coolly, "It may be a perfect system, for all I know or care, but it does not work." The Vivisectionist claimed that the sacrifice of animals was necessary to science. Bernard Shaw simply replied, "But yours is not a science; it is simply a series of more or less clumsy guesses." Other great geniuses have dwelt on the horrors of war, but depressed more than they impressed. Mr. Shaw made war ridiculous as well as hateful.

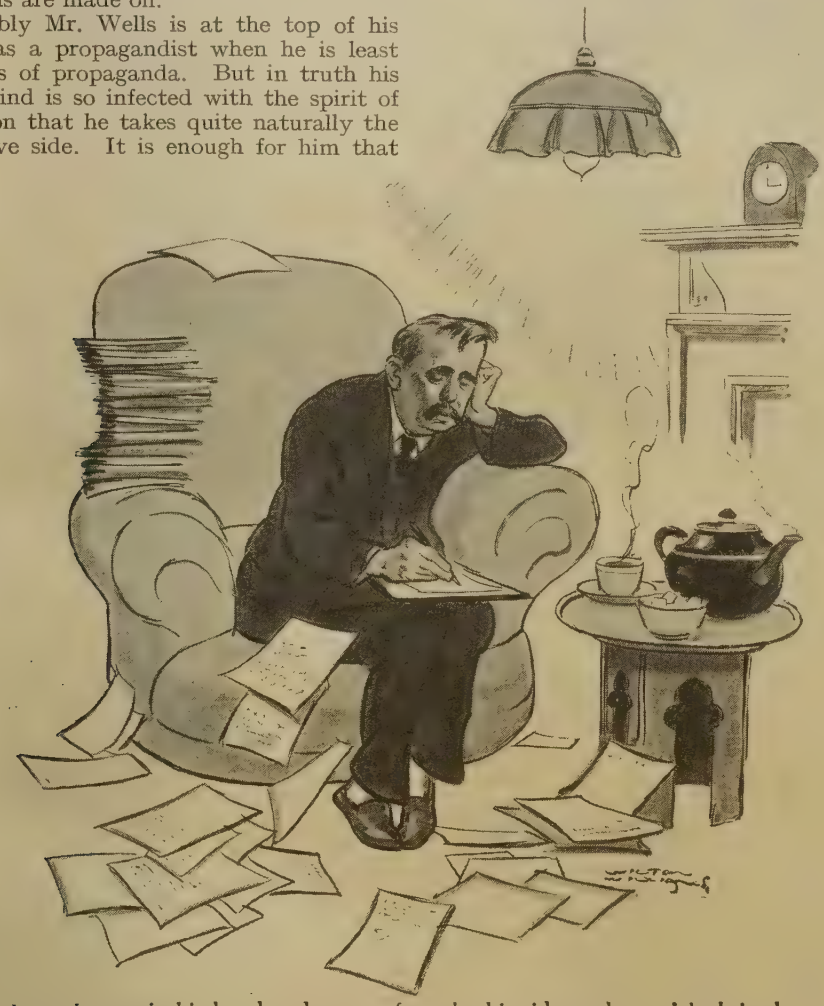
A merry rebel is the most dangerous of all rebels. Mr. Shaw's gift of merriment need not be insisted on; his theatre audiences are proof sufficient. In lesser matters he is equally far from conformity. As a fanatical vegetarian he will not take a meal where people feast on "dead animals," and declares that the time will come when "no gentleman will eat butter." He was once invited to dinner by Lady Randolph Churchill. "Certainly not," he telegraphed. "What have I done to provoke such an attack on my well-known habits?" The reply is said to have been caustic; somewhat on these lines: "Know nothing of your habits. Hope they are not so bad as your manners." His refusal of an invitation to the Rodin dinner was more gracious. "So far as I am concerned," he wrote, "the banquet is superfluous. I have already taken measures to secure my immortality by binding it to that of Rodin. Henceforward in every encyclopædia you will find, 'G. B. S.: Subject of a bust by Rodin, otherwise unknown!'"

Fighting things and people—the capitalist system, the marriage laws, the academic view of all the arts, the Shakespeare idolatry, doctors, school teachers, soldiers, fellow-Socialists, and Mr. Chesterton—is Mr. Shaw's only interest in the literary life. He cares a lot for words as things to pelt his opponents with, but has no joy in them for themselves. For art's sake, he once said, he would not be at the trouble to write a line. Yet he has a very high opinion of his own works, and complained during the war that one, "of the greatest value to society," was delayed through lack of paper. And he had sufficient of the artist's pride to refuse a large sum—it is said two hundred thousand pounds—offered for film rights in all his plays. "Filming," he said, "kills a play stone dead, and should therefore be applied to the corpses of plays that have had their run. Mine are immortal." It was probably the desire to be "agin" everybody that was responsible for Mr. Shaw's attitude during the war, an attitude equally hostile to the Pacifist and to the ordinary patriot. He infuriated the one by saying that it was absolutely essential to cure Germany of a "romantic dream," and the other by such remarks as that he made in France when told to put on his tin hat in entering a shrapnel-swept area. "No," he said, "if they do me in, then there's no gratitude in this world." Mr. Shaw himself could not be wholly ungrateful to the Germans, for it was in Germany that he was most considered, not only as a wit, but as a great thinker.

MR. SHAW'S main weapon is the solvent of wit; that of Mr. H. G. Wells is less easily described. He has all the tricks of his father, the Kent bowler, and many more peculiarly his own. But perhaps his most useful quality in controversy is simply that of making his point crystal clear. Mr. Wells can describe a world existing in his imagination much better than any other writer can describe the world he lives in. One of his "land iron-clads," the original of the tank—"something between a big blockhouse and a giant dish-cover"—is made to the reader as familiar as a toasting-fork. His monsters are more real than most novelists' men and women. It has been remarked that, while other romancers dealing with the moon treated it as merely another earth, Wells made his lunar beings as moony as we are earthy. The gift is so great and obvious that we notice it no more than most great and obvious things. But it has an enormous effect in bringing conviction. With most other Socialistic writers we have a mere theory of Socialism: a thing no more moving than a proposition in Euclid or Ricardo's theory of rent. Others, more gifted, give us a sort of ground-plan of the Socialistic State. Wells shows us the streets of the new City Beautiful, and the men and women walking about them, takes us into the houses and shows us exactly how they are furnished, and even the pattern of the shower-bath, tells us what people of the new world think and say and do—in a word, makes them just as much alive as the people

of to-day. One may suspect that many of his visions are mirages, but it needs a strong effort of the will to realize that "the cloud-capped towers, the gorgeous palaces" of the State as he foresees it are but "such stuff as dreams are made on."

Probably Mr. Wells is at the top of his powers as a propagandist when he is least conscious of propaganda. But in truth his whole mind is so infected with the spirit of revolution that he takes quite naturally the subversive side. It is enough for him that anything is unquestioned; automatically he begins to question it. Even Mr. Shaw is not quite so catholic in his antipathies. For Mr. Wells objects, on the whole, not only to human institutions, like the monarchy and "the blackmail of the Greek language specialist"—"classical education sticks like a cancer in the public-school time-table"—but to human nature itself. Human nature is far too untidy, sloppy, unreasonable, stupid, and sentimental for Mr. Wells, and he values Socialism not so much for its own sake as because he sees in it a chance of wholesale and fundamental change. Believing in the perfectibility of the species, he is tremendously conscious of the imperfections of everybody now living, and cannot forgive most people for being what they are. Thus he disagrees as profoundly with fellow-Socialists as with the outer barbarian. His great controversy with the Fabians is still remembered. It was their opinion that Mr. Shaw was too heavy argumentative metal for him; probably Mr. Wells takes a different view, but it must be said that on his feet he is not at his best. For he has a thin voice, and an unimpressive figure, and lacks the arts of the born manager of an audience. But put a fountain-pen in his hand and a pot of tea by his side at three o'clock in the morning, and there is no feat of literary derring-do of which he is not capable.



"Put a fountain-pen in his hand and a pot of tea by his side at three o'clock in the morning, and there is no feat of literary derring-do of which Mr. Wells is not capable."

A PAYMENT ON ACCOUNT

by H. C. McNEILE ("SAPPER")

ILLUSTRATED BY W SMITHSON BROADHEAD

I.

"EXCUSE me, but could you give me some idea as to where I am? I have a shrewd notion that it's Devonshire, but——"

The speaker, holding a dilapidated cap in his hand, broke off as the girl sat up and looked at him. He was a dishevelled-looking object, covered with dust, and—romance may be great, but truth is greater—it was only too obvious to the girl that he was very hot. Perspiration ran in trickles down his face, ploughing dark furrows through the thick stratum of road dust which otherwise obscured his features. His collar was open, his sleeves rolled back from his wrists, and on his back was strapped a small knapsack. An unlit pipe, which he had removed from his mouth on speaking to her, in one hand, and a long walking-stick in the other, completed the picture.

"You don't look as if you'd been flying," she remarked, dispassionately. "It's Devonshire all right."

"That's a relief." She had a fleeting glimpse of a flash of white teeth as he smiled. "I had an idea it might be Kent. Or even

"'Excuse me, but could you give me some idea as to where I am?' The

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farther. Have you ever been on a walking tour ? "

" That's what you're doing, is it ? "

" You know," remarked the man, " I think even Watson would regard you with scorn. And our one and only Sherlock would burst into tears." He leaned over the railings and commenced to fill his pipe. The little garden in which the girl was sitting seemed delightfully cool and shady ; the girl herself, in her muslin frock, looking at him with an amused twinkle in her eyes

girl sat up and looked at him. He was a dishevelled-looking object, covered with dust "

seemed almost too good to be true. After that interminable road, with the sun beating down from a cloudless sky. With a sigh of relief he passed the back of his hand across his forehead, and the girl laughed.

"I wouldn't do it by bits if I were you. It makes you look rather like a zebra."

"Don't mock at me," he implored, "or I shall burst into tears. It's the very first time I've ever done anything of this sort. I promise you. I will go farther. It's the very last as well."

"But if you don't like walking—why walk?"

"How like a woman!" He fumbled in his pocket for a box of matches and lit his pipe. "How exactly like! Have you never felt an irresistible temptation to do something wild and desperate? Something which is painted in glowing colours by some scoundrel, who revenges himself on humanity by foully inducing innocent people to follow his advice?"

"I once tried keeping bees," she murmured, thoughtfully.

"There you are!" exclaimed the man, triumphantly. "You see you are in no position to point the finger of scorn at me. You were led away by fictitious rubbish on the bee as a household pet. You expected honey: you obtained stings. I was likewise led away by a scoundrel who wrote on the delights of walking. He especially roused my expectation by the number of times he threw himself down on the soft, sweet-smelling turf while the gentle wind played round his temples and the lazy beat of the breakers came from the distant Atlantic. I tried that exercise the very first day. Net result: I landed on a thistle and winded myself."

She gurgled gently. "At any rate, I'll bet he told you that you ought to come with a map."

"Wrong again. He especially stipulated that you should have no set route. Just walk and walk; and then, I suppose, when a kindly death intervenes, your relatives can't find you, and your funeral expenses fall on the parish in which you expire."

He straightened up as the door of the house opened and a charming, grey-haired woman came slowly down the path. She glanced at him quickly—a courteous but shrewd look; then she looked at the girl.

"Sheila, dear, who——?"

"A gentleman on a walking tour, mother, who has lost his way."

"You're not far from Umberleigh," said the elder woman. "Where are you making for?"

"Nowhere in particular, as I've been explaining to your daughter, madam," smiled the man. "Finally, however, I shall take the train and arrive in London and slaughter the man who wrote the article which appeared in the paper."

"Sounds like the house that Jack built," laughed the girl. "Anyway, you'd better stop to lunch."

The man glanced at her mother, who seconded the invitation with a gracious smile.

"My name is Hewson," he remarked. "Charles Hewson." He glanced at them as he spoke, and gave a little sigh of relief: evidently the name meant nothing to them. "And I don't always look like a zebra."

He followed them slowly up the shady path, and the girl laughed again.

"Doesn't matter what you look like," she cried, "as long as you know something about postage-stamps."

"Do you collect?" he asked.

"No—but Daddy does. He's partially insane on the subject."

"Sheila!" reproved her mother.

"Well, he is, darling, you know. You always say so yourself."

For a moment the elder woman's eyes met the man's over the girl's head. And in that momentary glance the whole story of the house and its inmates seemed to stand revealed. The perfect love and happiness that breathed through the place; the certainty that it was the girl who was really the head of the little kingdom, with a sweet mother and an unpractical father as her adoring subjects; the glorious unworldliness of his surroundings struck the man like a blow. The contrast was so wonderful—the contrast to his own life. If only—— Unconsciously his glance rested on the slim figure in the muslin frock. If only—— Why not?

"I beg your pardon." He turned apologetically to the mother.

"I only said that our name was Crossley, Mr. Hewson. And I wondered if you would care to have a bath."

Charles Hewson looked at her gravely. "Are you always so charming, Mrs. Crossley, to the stranger within your gates? Especially when he's a dirty-looking tramp like me." Then he smiled quickly; it was a trick of his, that sudden, fleeting smile. "I can think of nothing I'd like more than a bath, if I might so far trespass on your hospitality."

II.

LUNCH confirmed his diagnosis of the Crossley household. The girl's father fitted in exactly with his mental picture; an utterly lovable, white-haired man of about sixty, and as unsophisticated as a child. Time, and the stress of things worldly, seemed to have passed over the little house near Umberleigh, leaving it untouched and

scathless. And once again the contrast struck him, and he wondered, just a little bitterly, whether after all it was worth it. The instant decisions, the constant struggle, the ceaseless strain of his life—and then, this. Country cousins, vegetating in obscurity. It struck Charles Hewson that he wouldn't object to being a vegetable for a while. He was tired, and he realized it for the first time. The last year had tried even him.

It was a sudden impulse that made him suggest it, just as luncheon was over.

"Is there a decent inn here, Mrs. Crossley, where I could put up for a bit? I've fallen in love with this place, and I want a rest."

"You look tired," she answered, kindly. "And this is a wonderful place for a rest cure. But I'm afraid the inn is a long way off. If you care to"—she paused for a moment—"we could put you up for a few days."

"I think you're the kindest people I've ever met," said Hewson, and for a moment his eyes ceased to look tired. "And I warn you I'm not going to give you a chance of reconsidering your offer."

"You'll find it very dull," warned the girl.

He laughed as they rose from the table. "I'm open to a small bet that you'll have to drive me away. I shall become a fixture about the house."

HE followed them into the low, old-fashioned hall, and stood for a while drinking in the homeliness of it all. That was what it was—homely; and in London Charles Hewson lived in rooms and fed at his club or a restaurant.

"I don't know if you're any judge of pewter, Mr. Hewson," said his host, "but we've got some nice bits here and in my study."

"One step from that to postage-stamps," laughed the girl. "You've got to come and do a job of work in the garden later, Mr. Hewson, don't forget. I'll come and rescue you in half an hour or so."

He watched her go upstairs, then with a little sigh of pure joy he followed the old man into his study.

"Are you interested in philately, by any chance?" inquired Mr. Crossley, eagerly.

Hewson shook his head. "I'm afraid I know nothing about it," he answered. "I was once commissioned by a young nephew to send him all the stamps I could find which had pretty pictures on them. You know, harbours, and mountains, and elephants. I found them in all sorts of outlandish places when I was going round the world." He gave one of his quick smiles. "But I'm afraid that is the extent of my knowledge."

"The schoolboy collection." The other waved a tolerant hand. "Now I'm sure that that would have bored him."

With reverent hands he lifted a card and handed it to Hewson. "Look at that, sir; look at that. The complete set of New Brunswick—the first issue, unused.

Hewson gazed dispassionately at ten somewhat blotchy pieces of paper, and refrained from heretical utterance. To his Philistine eye the set he had bought in Samoa or elsewhere depicting jaguars and toucans were infinitely more pleasing.

"Valuable, I suppose?" he hazarded.

The other waved a deprecating hand. "Several hundred—if I chose to sell. Mercifully," he went on after a little pause, "it wasn't necessary."

For a second Hewson's shrewd eyes were fixed on him: then he resumed his study of the rarities. Money trouble, was there?

"Now this *was* unique—this set." His host was looking regretfully at another card. "Mauritius. And then I had to dispose of the penny orange-red. Worth the better part of a thousand pounds alone." He laid down the card. "Oh! I do hope I shall be able to get it back. I sold it to a dealer in the Strand, and I told him at the time that I should want to buy it back again. That was a month ago, and I thought I should have been able to by now."

Once again Hewson's keen eyes were fixed on the other.

"Expecting a legacy?" he remarked, casually.

"A legacy! Oh! no!" The old man smiled. "But I had a very wonderful chance, given me by an acquaintance, of doubling my small capital." For a moment Hewson stopped smoking: chances of doubling capital are not handed round as a rule by acquaintances. "And I seem to have done it," continued Mr. Crossley, rubbing his hands together. "I seem to have turned my five thousand pounds into ten. In a month. Isn't it wonderful?"

"Very," commented the other. "Have you got the money?"

"No: that's what I can't understand. I suppose it must be something to do with settling day—or whatever they call it." He beamed at his listener. "I'm afraid I'm very ignorant on these matters, Mr. Hewson, but it seems almost too good to be true. I wanted the extra money so much—to give my little girl a better time. It's dull for her here, though she never complains. And if only I could get it now, I could buy back that penny Mauritius, and invest the other nine thousand." In his excitement he walked up and down the room, while his

listener stared fixedly at a number of blotchy pieces of paper on a card. "Do you know anything about stocks and shares, Mr. Hewson?"

"Quite a lot," said Hewson. "In my—er—small way I dabble in them."

"Ah! then perhaps you can tell me when I can expect the money." Mr. Crossley sat down at his desk, and opened a drawer. "It was a month ago that I paid five thousand pounds for shares in the Rio Lopez Mine."

"In the what?" Hewson almost shouted.

"The Rio Lopez Mine," repeated the other. "You've heard of it, of course. The shares were standing, so my friend told me, at two pounds, so I got two thousand five hundred shares. Now, yesterday I happened to buy the *Times*, and I looked up the Stock Exchange quotations. You can judge of my delight, Mr. Hewson, when I actually saw that the shares were standing at four pounds three shillings."

"Rio Lopez four pounds!" said Hewson, dazedly. "May I see the paper?"

He took it and glanced at the Supplementary List.

"MINES—MISCELLANEOUS.
"Rio Lopez Deep—4/3."

THE old man was still talking gaily on, but Hewson hardly heard what he said. From outside the lazy hum of a summer afternoon came softly through the open window, and after a while he laid down the paper and commenced to refill his pipe. Such colossal innocence almost staggered him. That there could be anybody in the world who did not know that the figures meant four shillings and threepence, left him bereft of speech. And then his feeling of amazement gave way to one of bitter anger against the scoundrel who had unloaded a block of shares in a wild-cat mine at the top of an extremely shady boom, on such a man as Mr. Crossley.

"Well, when do you think I may expect the money?" The question roused him from his reverie.

"It's hard to say, Mr. Crossley," remarked Hewson, deliberately. "Different firms have different arrangements, you know."

"Of course—of course. I'm such a baby in these things. But I do want to get my penny Mauritius back before it's sold."

Hewson bent forward suddenly, ostensibly to examine his pipe. For the first time for many years he found a difficulty in speaking; there had been no room for sentiment in his career. Then he straightened up.

"I quite understand, Mr. Crossley," he said, slowly. "And perhaps the best thing to do would be to put the matter in my hands. It has occurred to me since lunch that I've really got no clothes at all here. And so I thought I'd run up to Town and get a few and then return. While I'm up there I could look into things for you."

"But I really couldn't worry you, Mr. Hewson," protested the other.

"No worry at all. It's my work. I shall charge you commission." Hewson was lighting his pipe. "You have the certificate, I suppose."

"I've this paper," answered Mr. Crossley. "Is that what you mean?"

"That's it. Will you trust it to me? I can give you any reference you like, if you care to come with me as far as Barnstaple. They know me at the bank. I shall have to join the main line there."

"Well, perhaps——" The old man paused doubtfully. "You see, Mr. Merrison told me to keep this most carefully."

"Was Mr. Merrison the man who sold you the shares?"

"Yes. Mr. Arthur Merrison, of 20, Plumpton Street, in the City. He was stopping down here for a few days, and he dined with us once or twice."

Hewson rose abruptly and went to the window. He had not the pleasure of Mr. Arthur Merrison's acquaintance, but he was already tasting the pleasures of his first—and last—interview with that engaging gentleman. Dined—had he?

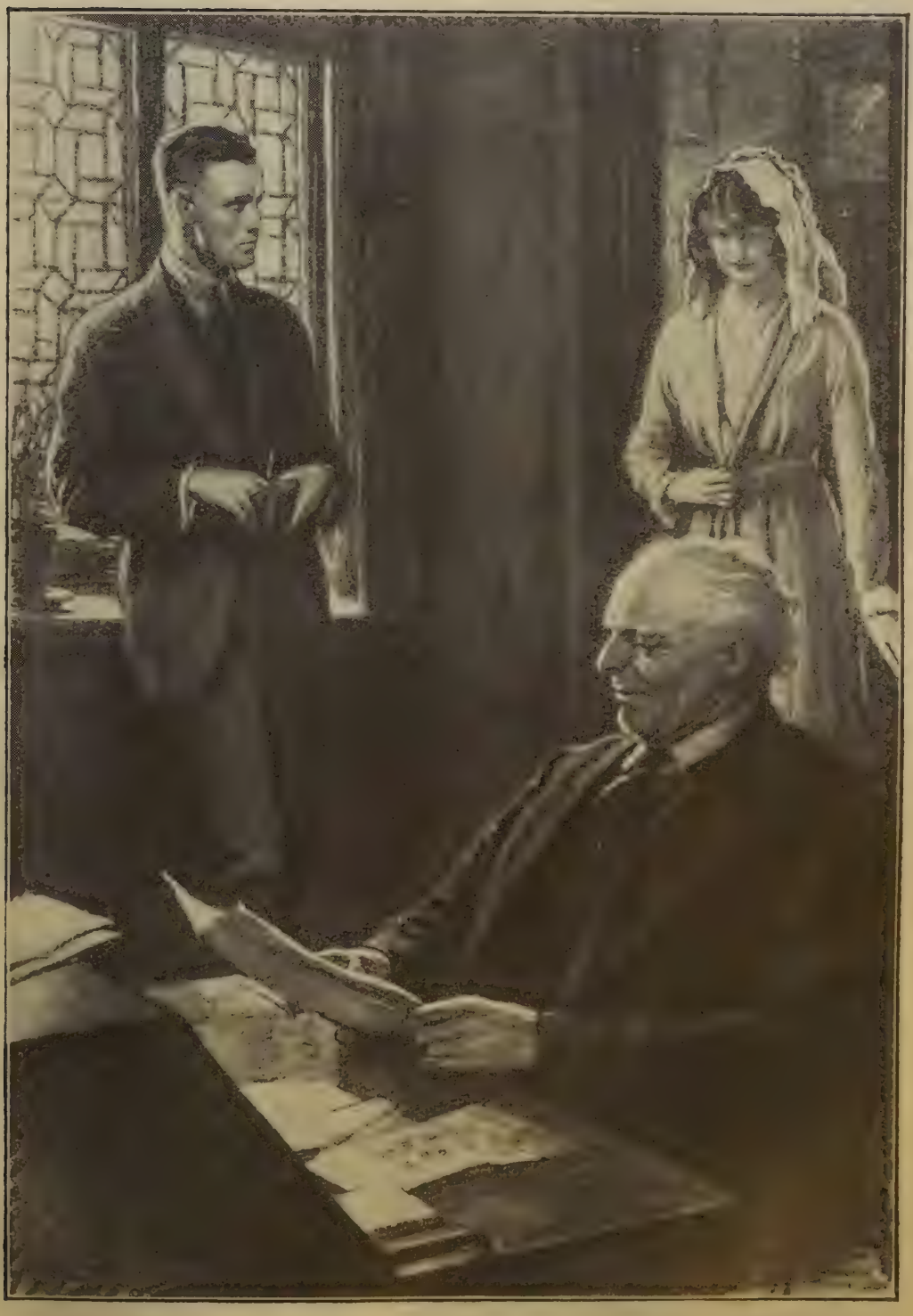
"Will you come over with me to Barnstaple this afternoon?"

"Good heavens! Daddy!" came a voice from outside. "What are you going to Barnstaple for? You know this heat will upset you."

Hewson swung round as the girl came in from the garden. She was wearing a floppy sun-bonnet, and it suddenly struck him that she was one of the loveliest things he had ever seen. No wonder the old chap had tried to get a bit more money with the idea of giving her a good time.

"I've got to go up to London, Miss Crossley ——" was it his imagination, or did her face fall a little—"to get some more clothes. And there's a little matter of business I'm going to attend to for your father. The point is that he doesn't know me—none of you know me. And in the hard-headed, suspicious world in which I live, before you entrust a valuable document to another man you want to know something about him. Now, the bank manager at Barnstaple does know me, and I suggested that your father should come over and see him."

"It sounds very mysterious," laughed the girl. "But all I know is that if Daddy goes to Barnstaple in this heat, he'll have the most awful head. Suppose—" she paused doubtfully—"suppose I came? Daddy could give me the document, and then when I'd



" Hewson swung round as the girl came in from the garden, and it suddenly struck him that she was one of the loveliest things he had ever seen."

seen the bank manager I could give it to you."

Hewson turned away to hide the too obvious delight he felt at the suggestion, and glanced inquiringly at his host.

"Perhaps that would be the best solution, Mr. Crossley," he murmured. "If it isn't troubling your daughter too much."

The old man chuckled. "If she only knew what it was for, she wouldn't mind the trouble. It's a secret, don't forget, Mr. Hewson. Now, girlie, take that envelope, and when the bank manager has told you that our kind friend here isn't a burglar, or an escaped convict——" he chuckled again —"give it to him to take to London. But you're not to look inside."

She kissed him lightly, and turned to Hewson.

"We can just catch the local train," she said, a trifle abruptly. "We'll go through the short cut."

She was silent during the walk to the station, and it was not until they were in the train that she looked at him steadily and spoke.

"What is this mystery, Mr. Hewson?"

"I think your father said it was a secret, didn't he?" he answered, lightly.

"Is it something to do with money?"

"It is."

She stared out of the window: then impulsively she laid a hand on his arm.

"He's such a darling," she burst out, "but he's so innocent. He doesn't know anything about money or the world."

"Do you?" asked Hewson, gently.

"That doesn't matter. A girl needn't. But I know he's just mad to get more money —not for himself—but for me. He wants to give me a good time—like other girls, he says." She paused a moment, and frowned. "There was a man here—a few weeks ago—and Daddy met him. He came to dinner. I didn't trust him, Mr. Hewson; there was something—oh! I don't know. I suppose I'm very ignorant myself. But I'm certain that he persuaded Daddy to do something with his money. He was always going to the bank, and sending registered letters, after the man left. And he's been worried ever since—until yesterday—when he recovered all his old spirits."

The train was already running into Barnstaple—the quickest journey that Charles Hewson had ever made in his life.

"I don't think," he said, gravely, "that I shall be letting out the secret if I tell you that my visit to London concerns that man, and some money he invested for your father. There's a little delay in the business—and I'm going to see about it."

They walked out of the station towards the bank, the girl clasping the precious envelope tightly.

"I want to see the manager," said Hewson to the cashier. "Hewson is my name."

With astonishing alacrity the manager appeared from his office.

"Come in, Mr. Hewson—come in." He stepped aside as the girl, followed by Hewson, entered his sanctum.

"I am doing some business for Mr. Crossley, of Umberleigh," said Hewson, quietly. "This is his daughter, Miss Crossley. It concerns some shares—the certificate of which I propose to take to London with me. Would you be good enough to assure Miss Crossley that I am a fit and proper person to be entrusted with such a matter? I happen to be a stranger to them."

The manager's face had changed through various stages of bewilderment while Hewson was speaking, but he was saved the necessity of an immediate answer by the girl. Charles Hewson—*the* Charles Hewson—coming to him to be vouched for!

"This is the paper." The girl handed it over to him, and a little dazedly he took the certificate from the envelope.

"A very admirable security," said Hewson, deliberately, "bought by Mr. Crossley a month ago."

"Very admirable!" spluttered the manager, only to relapse into silence under the penetrating stare of Hewson's eye.

"And if you will just vouch for me to Miss Crossley, I don't think we need detain you further."

"With pleasure." Matters were completely beyond him: but, at any rate, he could do that. "You can place things in Mr. Hewson's hands with absolute confidence, Miss Crossley."

"Thank you," said the girl, and they all rose. He opened the door and she passed into the bank. For one moment the two men were alone, and Hewson seized the manager by the arm.

"Not a word," he whispered. "They don't know who I am. Father been swindled by some swine in London."

Nodding portentously, the worthy manager followed them to the door. Assuredly one of the most remarkable episodes that had come his way, during thirty years' experience. Rio Lopez! Two thousand five hundred of them! And he was still staring dazedly at a placard extolling Exchequer Bonds, which adorned his office wall, when the London train steamed slowly out of the station. Its departure had been to the casual eye quite normal: but the casual eye is, as its name implies, casual. The departure had been far from normal.

It was just as the guard was waving his flag that a man, leaning out of the window

of a first-class carriage, spoke to a girl standing on the platform.

" You say you didn't trust the man, Miss Crossley. Do you—trust me ? "

" Naturally," she answered, demurely, " after what the bank manager said."

" It rests on the bank manager, does it ? "

She blushed faintly. " No, Mr. Hewson, it doesn't. One doesn't need a bank manager to confirm—a certainty."

And then the fool engine-driver had started his beastly machine. But to call it a normal departure is obviously absurd.

III.

" GOOD morning. Mr. Merrison, I believe ? "

Hewson entered the office at 20, Plumpton Street, and bowed slightly to the man at the desk. As he had expected, the type was a common one—one, incidentally, with which he had had a good deal to do himself. Mr. Arthur Merrison could be placed at once in the category of men who consider that in business everything is fair, and that if they can get the better of another man the funeral is his. And as an outlook on life there is nothing much to be said against it, provided the other man is of the same kidney.

" Yes." Merrison indicated a chair. " What can I do for you, Mr.——" He paused, interrogatively.

" I have come to have a short talk with you on a little matter of business." Hewson took the proffered chair, while Merrison glanced at him covertly. Who the deuce was the fellow ? His face seemed vaguely familiar.

" Delighted ! " he murmured. " Have a cigar ? "

" Thank you—no. I have just come from Umberleigh, in Devonshire, Mr. Merrison."

A barely perceptible change passed over the other's face.

" Indeed," he said, easily. ' I was there myself a little while ago."

" So I understood," remarked Hewson. " A Mr. Crossley told me that you had been good enough to sell him some shares while you were there—a packet of Rio Lopez, to be exact."

" I did," answered Merrison. " Though I hardly see what concern it is of yours."

" All in good time," said Hewson, taking the certificate from his pocket. " Two thousand five hundred, I see, when they were standing at two pounds. And to-day they're a shade over four shillings—to-morrow, quite possibly, sixpence."

" Everything is down," remarked Merrison with a wave of his hand. " Sorry for Mr. Crossley."

" So am I," said the other. " It seems hard luck on an innocent old man like that to be left to carry the baby. He apparently placed such reliance on your judgment, Mr. Merrison. Moreover, I gather you dined with him two or three times."

" Well, what if I did ? " He leaned back in his chair impatiently. " Might I suggest that time is money to some of us, and that I'm rather busy this morning ? I'd be obliged if you'd get to the point."

" Certainly," said Hewson, quietly. " I have a nice little bunch of two thousand five hundred Rio Lopez which I shall be delighted to sell you, on behalf of Mr. Crossley —at two pounds a share."

For a moment or two Mr. Merrison seemed to have difficulty in breathing.

" Buy Rio Lopez at two ! " he gasped. " Are you insane ? "

" Not at all," murmured Hewson, lighting a cigarette. " That is my offer."

" Good morning," laughed the other. " You know the way out, don't you ? And another time, my dear sir, you'd better learn a little more about the ways of finance before you waste your own and other people's time coming up from the wilds of Devon." He pulled a paper towards him and picked up his pen. It struck him as one of the richest things he'd ever heard—a jest altogether after his own heart. And it was just as the full beauty of it was sinking in, that his eye caught the card which his visitor had pushed along the writing-desk.

" Mr. Charles Hewson." Blinking slightly he stared at it : then he put down his pen. " Mr. Charles Hewson."

" You may know the name, Mr. Merrison," remarked the other, quietly. " And I can assure you that your solicitude for my knowledge of finance touches me deeply."

" But, I don't understand, Mr. Hewson. I had no idea who you were, but now that I do know it makes your suggestion even more amazing."

" In an ordinary way of business, certainly," agreed Hewson. " This is not quite ordinary. Without mincing words, I consider that you played Mr. Crossley an extremely dirty trick—considering that he'd opened his house to you, and was quite obviously as ignorant of business as a child. Why—the poor old chap saw the price in the paper the other day and thought they were standing at four pounds three shillings." He was staring at Merrison with level eyes as he spoke. " I give you the chance of returning him the money he gave to you. If you do—the matter is ended. If you don't—I shall pay it myself. But—and this is the point, Mr. Merrison, which you had better consider—if I pay that money, I shall recover it from you. Is it worth your while to have me for an enemy ? As surely

as I'm sitting here, by the time I've finished with you, you'll not have lost five thousand —you'll have lost fifty."

"It wouldn't be worth your while," blustered Merrison, though the hand which held his cigar shook a little.

"Worth is a comparative term," said Hewson, calmly. "Financially, I agree: you're not big enough to worry over. But it will afford me great pleasure and amusement, Mr. Merrison—and from that point of view it *will* be worth while." He took out his watch. "I'll give you two minutes to decide."

He got up and strolled round the room, glancing every now and then at the man sitting at the desk. In advance, he knew the answer: any man in Merrison's place would think twice and then again before he deliberately took up such a challenge. And quite accurately he read the thoughts that were passing in the other's mind. Dare he gamble on the possibility of Hewson—as time went by—forgetting his threat, and letting the thing drop? That was the crux. It was an insignificant amount to a man like Hewson, but—was it the money that was at the bottom of it? While a man in Hewson's position might well forget five thousand pounds, there might be some other factor which would not slip his mind. It suddenly occurred to Mr. Arthur Merrison that there was a singularly attractive girl in the Crossley household. And if she was the driving factor. . . . One thing was perfectly certain: he would willingly pay five thousand to escape a relentless vendetta with Charles Hewson as his enemy. It was no idle threat on the latter's part: if he chose to he could ruin him.

"Well?" With a snap Hewson closed his watch. "What is it to be?"

By way of answer Merrison took out his cheque-book.

"Good. Make your cheque payable to Mr. Crossley, and make it for ten thousand. I will give you a cheque for five. You can notify the company as to the transfer."

He drew his own cheque-book from his pocket.

"And another time, Mr. Merrison, leave the Crossleys of this world alone. Good-morning."

Mr. Arthur Merrison was still staring dully out of the window when Charles Hewson entered a stamp shop in the Strand in search of a penny Mauritius.

IV.

"I CAN hardly believe it. In just over a month. And the stamp as well. Mr. Hewson—I can never thank you sufficiently."

Back in the sunny study at Umberleigh, Mr. Crossley stared dazedly—first at his precious stamp, then at the cheque.

"Ten thousand pounds! I must write him a letter and thank him."

"I'm sure Mr. Merrison would like that," murmured Hewson. "But if I may give you a word of advice, Mr. Crossley, I wouldn't try a gamble like that again. Mines are precarious things—very precarious."

"You mean, I might have lost my money?" said the old man, nervously.

"Such things have been known to happen," said Hewson, gravely. "By the way—is your daughter not at home?"

"She has gone over to Barnstaple with her mother. I'm expecting them back at any moment. Won't they be delighted?" He chuckled gleefully, and produced the precious card containing the Mauritius set. And with a quiet smile on his face Charles Hewson watched him from the depths of an armchair. What a child he was: what a charming, lovable child.

"There: the complete set again." In triumph he held up the card for Hewson's inspection, and at that moment Mrs. Crossley and the girl came through the window.

The good news poured out in a torrent, while Hewson stood almost forgotten in the background.

Ten thousand pounds—two thousand five hundred shares—capital doubled in a month —and the stamp. The old man brandished the cheque in his excitement, and, at length, Mrs. Crossley turned to Hewson with a smile.

"We seem to have entertained an angel unawares," and her eyes were a little misty. "Thank you, Mr. Hewson."

"No need to thank me, Mrs. Crossley," he laughed. "These things just happen."

He glanced at the girl, who had so far said nothing. She was staring at him steadily, and there was no answering smile on her face.

"Did you say two thousand five hundred shares, Daddy?" Her voice was quite expressionless, as she turned to her father.

"That's it, little girl," he cried. "Sold at over four pounds a share. Now you'll be able to have some more frocks!"

He kissed her lovingly, and followed his wife from the room, still chuckling and rubbing his hands together.

"Would you explain, please, Mr. Hewson?" said the girl, in a flat, dead voice as the door closed.

"Explain, Miss Crossley! How do you mean? Your father acquired some shares a little while ago—two thousand five hundred, as he told you—which have just been sold at rather over four pounds a share. Hence the stamp—and a cheque for ten thousand."

"I went into the bank at Barnstaple this afternoon," said the girl, dully, "and I

"'Oh, stop, please!' With a little cry that was half a sob she rose. 'Because we offer you lunch Mr. Hewson, it gives you no right to dare to give my father money.'"

ppened to speak to the cashier. He told e who you were. You're a multi-millionre, aren't you ? "

Charles Hewson shrugged his shoulders. I'm afraid I am," he laughed. " Is that hat you want me to explain ? "

" Don't laugh, please," said the girl, ıietly. " I said that you'd been good ıough to do some business for us—someing to do with Rio Lopez Shares. He said Good heavens ! Miss Crossley, surely Mr. ewson hasn't put you into Rio Lopez ? ' said, ' Why not—aren't they good shares ? ' ou see, I didn't know what the business as you were doing. He said, ' Good ! Why ıe blessed things aren't worth much more ıan the paper they're written on. Standing ıout four shillings, I think.' And now you ll me you've sold two thousand five undred of them at over four pounds." im and erect she stood there facing him. I don't know anything about business : ıt I'm not a fool. So will you please xplain ? "

If there was anything really in the absent eatment business, an unsuspecting and ell-meaning cashier would have fallen dead the bank at that moment.

" Will you come into the garden, Miss rossley ? " said Hewson, gravely. " I could xplain better out of doors."

In silence she followed him, and they found wo chairs under a shady tree.

MERRISON," he began, quietly, " the man who was down here a month ago, was a pretty smart gentleıan. He did a business deal with your ıther which, legally speaking, was quite ı order. He possessed two thousand five undred Rio Lopez, which, at that time, ere standing at two pounds. He sold ıose shares to your father, knowing perectly well that they were only standing at ıch a figure because of a distinctly shady rtificial boom which had been given them. Ie knew they were bound to slump—that is, all in price. So he—finding your father upremely ignorant of finance—unloaded hose shares on to him, and left him—as the aying goes—to carry the baby. In other vords, shares that your father paid two ounds each for, he would only get four hillings for to-day. This morning I interiewed Mr. Merrison in his office. And I ersuaded him—how, is immaterial—to reund your father the money. That's all here is to it."

" I see," said the girl. " It was very good f you. But if my father only paid two ounds for each share—that makes five housand. The cheque he's got is for ten. Iow did he double his capital ? "

Hewson bit his lip : how indeed ?

" Oh ! please be frank, Mr. Hewson. Have you given my father five thousand pounds ? "

His fingers beat a tattoo on the arm of his chair.

" Yes," he said at length. " I have. The dear old man thought the shares were standing at four pounds : he read the four and threepence in the paper as four pounds three shillings. And," he turned appealingly to the girl, " if you could only dimly guess what pleasure it's given me, Miss Crossley."

" Oh ! stop, please." With a little cry that was half a sob she rose. " I suppose you meant it for the best : thought you were being kind. I don't suppose you realized your—your impertinence. Because we offer you lunch, Mr. Hewson, it gives you no right to dare to give my father money. And now it's going to be doubly hard for him—when I tell him. He'll be so—so ashamed."

She turned away, hiding her face in her hands, and for a while there was silence in the sunny garden. And in that moment the man knew that the quest was over, the quest—conscious or unconscious, it matters not—that has been man's through the ages. But no hint of it sounded in his level voice as he spoke : the time for that was not yet.

' And so, Miss Crossley, you propose to tell your father ? "

" What else can I possibly do ? " She turned on him indignantly.

" Of course you must decide," he continued quietly. " I quite see how the matter looks to you : I wonder if you are being equally fair to me. I come here : I meet your father. I find that he has been swindled by a man in London—a moral swindle only possible because of your father's charming innocence. I wonder if you can realize what the atmosphere of this place means to me—an atmosphere which must depend, to a large extent, on the happiness and joy of you three."

She was watching him now, and suddenly his swift smile flashed out. " Don't you understand, Miss Crossley, that all money is relative ? I'm going to allude purposely to my disgusting wealth. You wouldn't think much of paying five shillings for pleasure, would you ? Well, five thousand pounds means no more to me. And I've bought myself pleasure with that money such as I don't think you can begin to conceive of." Again he smiled : then before she could reply he went on. " So I want you to remember, when you make your decision, what you are going to sacrifice on the altar of pride. My feelings don't matter : but are you going to deliberately prick the bubble of your father's happiness and change him in a moment from

a delighted child into a broken and worried old man?"

The girl bit her lip and stared over the rambling garden with troubled eyes. How could she let her father take the money: how could she? And then she heard his voice again from close behind her.

"I'm going back to London," he said, deliberately, "and I would ask you to keep this as *our* secret. I hadn't intended to go back yet: but now that you have found out—perhaps it's better. I'll leave you free to puzzle the thing out by yourself: only I want to make one condition."

"What's that?" whispered the girl.

"I want to come back for my promised visit later." Gently he swung her round and his eyes—tender and quizzical—rested on the lovely face so close to his. "And when I come back, I'm going to ask you a question, which, if you can see your way to answering with a yes, will make me your father's debtor for life. And then we could consider the five thousand as a payment on account, which would completely and finally settle the matter."

Almost against her will, a faint smile bega to twitch round the girl's lips.

"Of course I'm not much good at busines as I said, but I didn't know that anybod ever paid on account until he had, at an rate, the promise of the goods."

"In these days of competition," murmure Hewson, "one sometimes has to pay for th right of the first refusal."

The smile was twitching again. "Tha right is yours without payment."

"Then I'd better get it over quickly Sheila—will you marry me?"

"Mr. Hewson—I will not. Where are yo going?"

Charles Hewson turned half-way acros the lawn. "Up to London. I want to fin a man there, and give him the best dinne he's ever had in his life."

"What man?"

"The sportsman who wrote that articl about walking tours." It was then th smile broke bounds.

"We've got some topping peaches in th garden. Couldn't you send him some o those as—a payment on account?"

ACROSTICS.

DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 84.

SELECT a card from out the pack,
Choosing a red one, not a black.

1. Headless it has to be, or so
It would be were the head to go.

2. More than three words, or less than one,
The apple's product is begun.

3. With firm conviction we maintain
A fathom is a piece of chain.

4. Suggesting road to wealth, a clue
Provides, a simple task to do.

5. Her character who will may trace
Where foes were new though old their face.

6. Two Western places take; instead
Write down his proper name; behead.

7. Fluent was one who bore this name:
For fluid, rearrange the same.

8. A crater, many miles around:
In the Apennines it will be found.

PAX.

Answers to Acrostic No. 84 should be addressed to the Acrostic Editor, THE STRAND MAGAZINE, *Southampton Street, Strand, London, W.C 2, and must arrive not later than by the first post on July 9th.*

Two answers may be sent to every light.

It is essential that solvers, with their answers to th acrostic, should send also their real names and addresses.

ANSWER TO No 82.

1.	G az	A
2.	I l	L
3.	B yn	G
4.	R ak	E
5.	A spi	C
6.	L ev	I
7.	T ea	R
8.	A nn	A
9.	R aspberrie	S

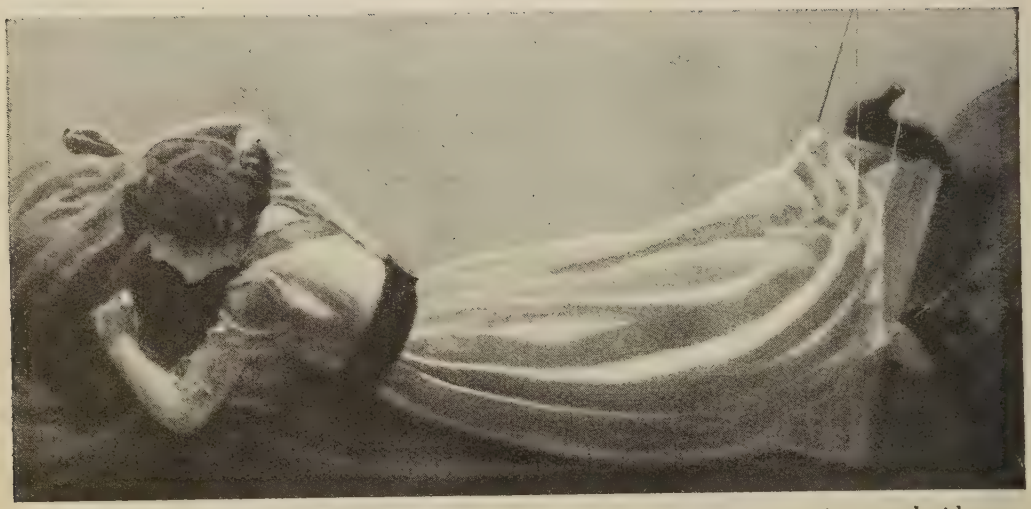
NOTES.—Light 2. It is an ill wind that blows no on any good. 6. Evil. 8. Hannah, Anna. Or, Madam, Ada.

ANSWER TO No. 83.

1.	T ar	E
2.	W hee	L
3.	E ugen	E
4.	L o	V
5.	V ehicl	E
6.	E ri	N

NOTES.—Light 2. Rouen. French, *roue*, wheel 3. Eugene Aram: A.R.A.M., a ram. 4. Love, nothing clover, plover. 6. Ireland. Fair Head, Pat.

Correspondents who write to the Acrostic Editor and desir answers should enclose stamped addressed envelopes wit their letters, and the A.E. will endeavour to reply. Lac of space makes it impossible to answer in print.



The purpose of this strange pose will not be apparent until the picture is turned sideways and compared with the sketch on the opposite page.

Studio "Fakes"

by

CHAS. CROMBIE

SINCE the magazine illustrator often has to work to time, with editors close upon his heels and engravers waiting to make the blocks from which his drawing will be printed, he endeavours always to employ the most direct method, and if the subject in hand presents comparatively little difficulty, he may even dispense with the aid of a model. There are, however, many types of illustration that call for a considerable amount of preparation and not a little ingenuity before the artist can put a pencil to paper, and the illustrator's path is often beset with obstacles of which the reader probably has no idea.

It is in the posing of models that some of the greatest difficulties arise. Many poses necessitated by the demands of "action" stories are physically impossible for the model to maintain for sufficient length of time (however experienced he or she may be), and it is in this connection that the artist is sometimes obliged to resort to a "fake." Cushions, planks, mattresses, string, and any other oddments that chance to be at hand are utilized to obtain the desired effect, and although the results often appear extremely ludicrous to the observer, they serve the required purpose in assisting the artist to make a convincing and realistic drawing, with the correct lighting, natural folds of the drapery and so on, without undue strain upon the model. Whenever possible the artist prefers to avoid "faking" a subject, and it must therefore be understood that the improvisations referred to in this article are not the common order of the day among illustrators, neither have they all been invented by one individual. Rather, they are the outcome of the experience of a number of artists — composite inventions born of necessity.

As an example of how a seemingly impossible pose may be achieved, the photograph of the lady reclining on the couch may be of interest. Her position, though

perhaps unusual, is perfectly comfortable. The arms are supported by cushions, one of the feet is held in position by a box, and the dress is draped with the aid of string. The purpose of this strange pose is not at first apparent, but if the picture is turned sideways so that the girl's figure is in a standing position, and then compared with the half-finished sketch on this page, it will be seen that the artist has obtained all the necessary movement required for the illustration of a dramatic struggle—a position which the model obviously could not have maintained by any other means.

Two more examples of the posing of figures in action are worthy of mention, both of which are comparatively simple when the secret is revealed. The first shows a man running, a study that is full of vigorous movement — clearly a difficult position for a model to hold for any length of time. Yet by sitting on the edge of a chair he may be immediately relieved of the strain, and can remain in position with comparative comfort sufficiently long for the artist to make a rough sketch. The second is also an athletic subject—an incident in the five mile race at the Lancing College sports. Note the figure in the act of jumping the ditch. The artist was present at the sports, and made several rough sketches on the spot, after which he returned to his studio to commence work on the drawing. Here he was confronted by the problem as to how he might pose the model in the position of the jumping figure. The accompanying photograph shows exactly how this is done. The gentleman is kneeling comfortably on a mattress, and resting his arm on the back of a chair, whilst a piece of rope assists him in maintaining the position of the left arm.

On page 61 of this issue there appears an illustration in which the principal figure is a girl in the act of making a forward drive in

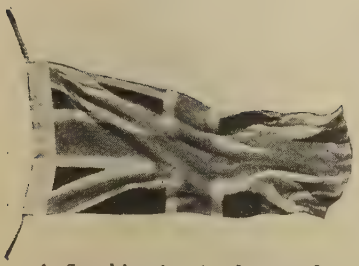
A half-finished drawing depicting a dramatic struggle. The figure of the girl was posed as shown in the preceding picture.

a game of tennis. Here again the model was posed with the aid of cushions, much after the style of those already mentioned, but in this case the artist found himself up against another little problem. Owing to the obstructions, the pose did not produce the correct effect of light and shade, and he was somewhat at a loss to ascertain what form the shadow upon the ground would take. He overcame the difficulty by making a rough clay model, in miniature, of the figure in the same position as the girl in the illustration, which, when placed underneath an electric light, cast a natural shadow exactly as he required.

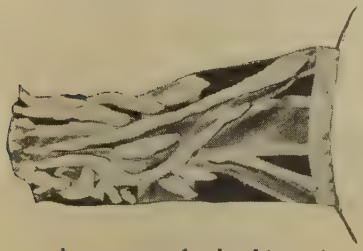
How a man may be posed in a running position without undue strain—the dotted lines indicate the position of the chair upon which the man rests.

This rough clay model was made for the purpose of studying the shadow cast by the tennis-player on page 61 of this issue.

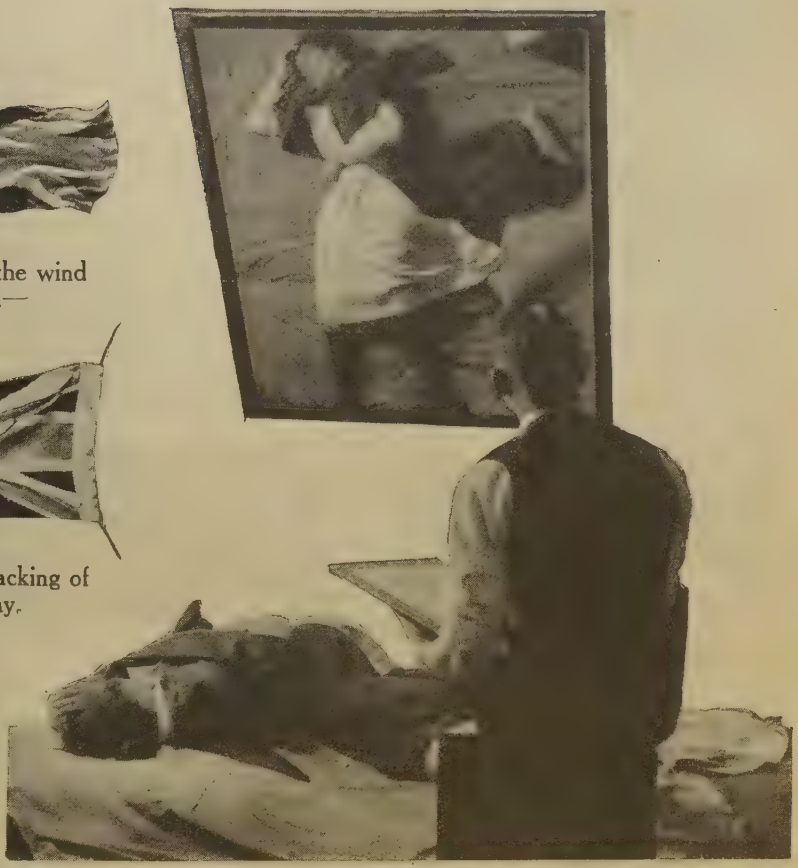
The finish of the cross-country race at the Lancing College sports. Inset shows how the jumping figure was posed.



A flag blowing in the wind may be faked—



by means of a backing of modelling clay.



The effect of flowing draperies may be obtained by reclining the model upon cushions and drawing her reflection in a sloping mirror.

The illustrator often finds a difficulty in drawing draperies that are supposed to be floating in the wind. We will assume that he intends to depict a girl making her way through a storm. To arrange the draperies by means of string would be difficult as well as unsatisfactory, and the only manner in which a convincing pose may be obtained is by reclining the lady upon the floor. The draperies may then be arranged exactly as required by means of a little judicious padding, and a correct view of the figure may be obtained by arranging a sloping mirror above the artist's head. The above photograph shows exactly how this was achieved.

In this picture the toboggan consists of a step-ladder, a plank, a box, and a portion of an iron bedstead, whilst the scarf is supported by strings.

Of all subjects in motion, one of the most elusive to draw is a flag, because it is constantly fluttering, changing shape and position, and never still for an instant. The illustrator may overcome this difficulty by covering the back of the flag with thin strips of modelling clay, which enable him to shape it exactly as he requires.

As an example of how the various odds and ends of household furniture may be sometimes useful to the illustrator in

arranging a pose, the photograph of the tobogganing figure is suggestive. The "toboggan" consists of a step-ladder surmounted by a plank, an ordinary box serves as a foot-rest, whilst a portion of an iron bedstead, fixed firmly to allow the model to get a strong pull, takes the place of the wheel. The scarf is supported by strings to give the effect of movement, and the sheet is spread under the "toboggan" in order to give the obliged frequently to transfer his glance from the easel to the mirror. He employs this means, therefore, only to obtain a glimpse of some minor detail of which he may not be quite certain—as, for example, the correct position of the hand when holding a revolver.

Another type of illustration that calls for a considerable amount of preparation is the historical subject. In order to please a large circle of readers and to do justice to the story that he is illustrating, the artist must make certain that all the details of uniforms, costumes, furniture, vehicles, firearms, and so on are drawn correctly according to period. He must, therefore, possess, in addition to his technical knowledge and ability, a comprehensive collection of books

Working in a confined space. The model is posed behind the artist, who is drawing from the reflection.

necessary upward reflection of light such as is produced by snow.

There are occasions upon which an illustrator may be obliged to work at a considerable disadvantage, owing to lack of space, or because he cannot arrange for the light to fall upon both the model and the easel without bringing the former so close that he is unable to obtain a satisfactory view of his subject. Here again the mirror may be employed to advantage, and the model can be posed immediately behind the artist, as shown in the photograph of the pierrette. The mirror also comes in handy upon occasions when a model is not available, the artist making the necessary pose himself and drawing from the reflection. In such cases the illustrator is not, of course, able to hold a pose for any length of time, since he is and pictures on all subjects, to which he can refer when in doubt.

The most satisfactory method of ensuring correctness of detail in a drawing of this kind is to hire the dress of the period from a costumier, but when this is impossible, the artist has again to resort to "faking." The figure of the man seated astride a dummy horse (composed of a camera tripod, a plank, and a rolled-up mattress) is an example of this. The costume of the fifteenth century is made from a curtain, an old shirt, long stockings, and other oddments, and it is sufficient to enable the artist to study the effect of the pose, the lighting, and the folds of the drapery. The more intricate details would, of course, be added to the finished drawing after further reference to the artist's collection of pictures already referred to.

Similarly the costume of the lady in the eighteenth century is improvised from an ordinary blanket. An overcoat is arranged round the hips, the blanket is then folded over a string and draped round the waist. The front of the bodice, or stomacher, consists of an old shirt, and a paper bow is pinned on to add a finishing touch to the costume.

The difficulties of the illustrator, however, cannot all be overcome by "faking," and even in the simple depictions of everyday life there are many pitfalls into which the unwary may tumble. Not only must the characters be drawn to tally with the author's description, but dresses must be correct and up-to-date, and the artist must needs keep his eye upon the prevailing fashions. The illustrator who depicts the girl of to-day in one of yesterday's frocks will most assuredly annoy the lady reader—and should he commit the error of drawing a man in a bowler hat when the author distinctly mentions that his hero is wearing a cap, he can look forward to receiving a little shower of criticism through the post. Similarly, in pictures of sea life the riggings and fittings of a vessel must be correctly drawn, for to the men who make the sea their home, an error in detail of this kind is little short of criminal.

One would think, perhaps, that the artist could rely upon his trained observation and upon his memory to depict the people one meets in the street, but a moment's reflection will show that even this is not quite so easy as it appears. For example, how many people who pass a policeman every day of their lives could draw his uniform correctly, or stand at the artist's elbow and instruct him how to do so? How many buttons has he upon his tunic? On which arm is the duty badge worn? What sort of chin-strap is attached to the helmet, and does a policeman on point duty wear a belt? The illustrator

A fifteenth-century horseman, whose costume was improvised from an old shirt, a curtain, long stockings, and other oddments. His "steed" consists of a camera tripod surmounted by a mattress and a plank.

Artist and model too. How the mirror may sometimes be employed when no model is available.

must be able to answer all these questions when occasion demands, either from memory or by means of his reference library—unless he prefers to leave his easel and dash into the street in search of a representative of the law.

To eliminate the possibility of error in the enormous range of subjects that he is called upon to illustrate, the artist really needs to know his subject from actual experience, and there are, therefore, many illustrators who specialize in one particular style of drawing—one undertakes nothing else but golfing pictures, another adheres to sea subjects, whilst a third makes a study of hunting or fishing. The "all-round" illustrator who does not specialize must possess a very good general knowledge, and must also be able to invoke the aid of an expert if he intends to produce a drawing that is a careful blending of art with realism, and appreciation of beauty with adherence to detail.

Apropos of this, a drawing appeared in a magazine not very long ago, depicting a girl punting on the river. Ninety-nine persons out of every hundred passed it by with little or no comment—it was pleasing to the eye, the subject was picturesque, the girl was pretty, and the composition was faultless.

But the hundredth reader happened to know something about punting, and he quickly observed that the girl was raising the pole with a slight tilt towards the centre of the boat. Those who have ever had personal experience of punting will know that the holding of the pole in this position would cause a stream of water to run down and trickle all over the boat, with considerable discomfort to the occupants. The error brought forth a deal of criticism through the post, besides a few well-chosen words from the editor.

The late Mr. Phil May, the famous humorist, was once guilty of a similar error in detail. In a sketch of a cricket match, for some unaccountable reason he drew the figure of a man in the "slips" wearing wicket-keeping gloves.

Shortly after the sketch was published, the artist received a telegram from one of his friends:—

"Why is man in slips wearing wicket-keeping gloves?"

Phil May's reply was brief and crushing. It ran:—

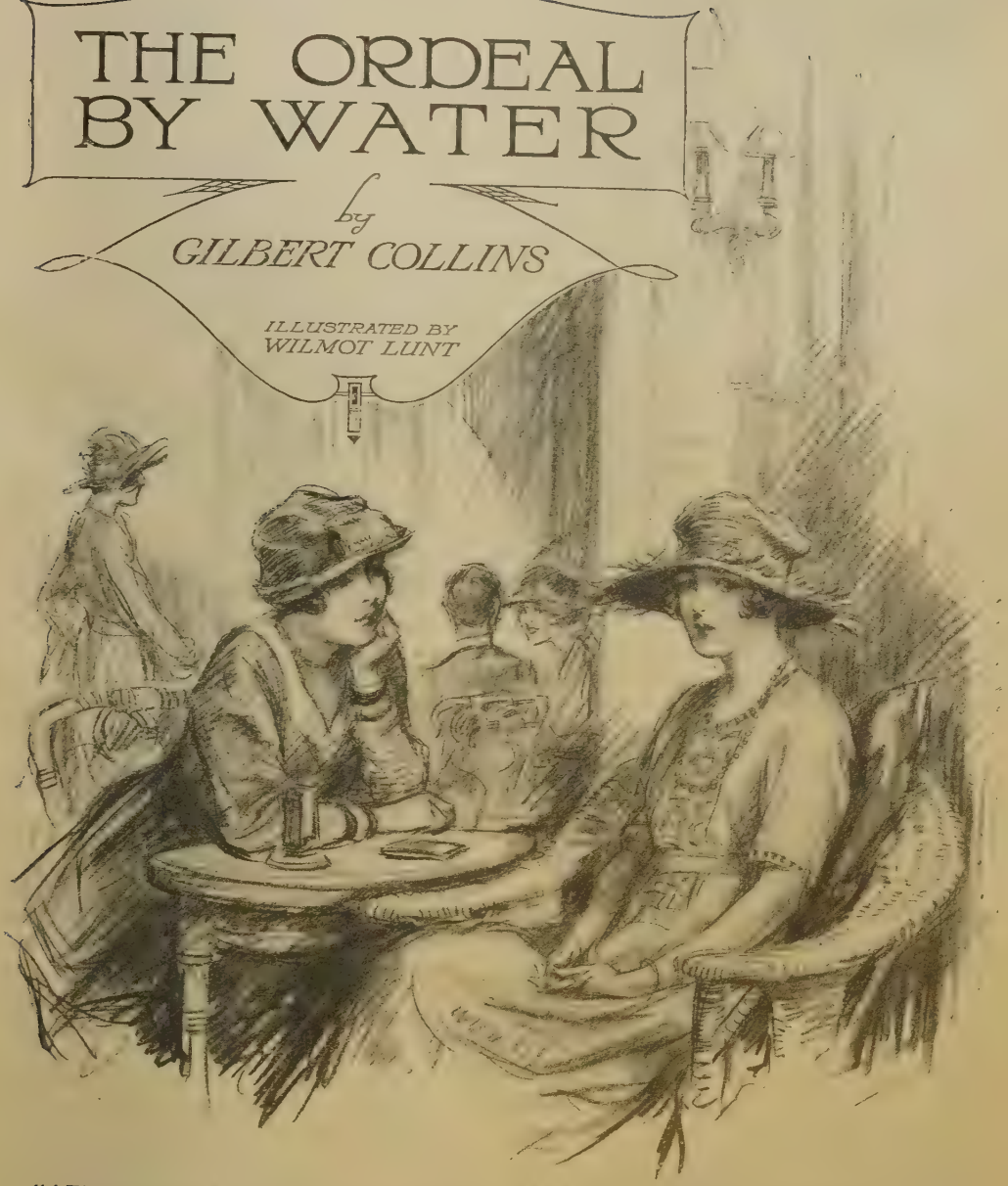
"To keep his hands warm."

A lady's costume of the eighteenth century, made from an ordinary blanket and an old shirt.

THE ORDEAL BY WATER

by GILBERT COLLINS

ILLUSTRATED BY WILMOT LUNT



"'Please don't be clever with me, dear,' said Audrey, with acid sweetness. 'We're supposed to be pals, you know.'"

CHARLES JULIUS BLENNER-HASSET TODD (according to the Registrar of Births), or "Toddles" (as he was known to everybody else), stood five feet six inches high in boots; and therein lies an epitome of his tragi-comic existence. Had the feet been six and the inches five it is conceivable that he would have agreed to measurement in his socks, but as it was, he begged to be excused. Not that he felt an unsurmountable contempt for meagre stature in itself, but when he compared his own sixty-six inches with Hilda Manthony's seventy, the breast of Charles Julius heaved with a portentous sigh and his tongue swore freely at Fate.

A Hyde Park orator would have classed Toddles among the "idle rich," but this would not have been strictly just, for Toddles had a profession. He was a writer of brave

romances. Whatever the Hyde Park orator may have thought, Toddles's publishers appear to have believed that he worked to produce these books, for they paid him handsomely. The reading public, too, paid Toddles's publishers handsomely—but that is neither here nor there. The point is that Toddles's books "went well," and it was only natural that they should. No public with an ounce of live blood in its veins could resist those tall, stern, whalebone-and-whipcord heroes whose adventures Toddles delighted to narrate. The book that might have been his masterpiece he hadn't the heart to write. And in any case it wouldn't have gone so well as the others, although it would have contained far more exact inside knowledge. Its title would have been: "An Exposure of the Utter Futility of Seventeen Physical Culture Systems for Increasing the Height."

Toddles accepted his popularity with no very great disturbance of the pulse. It was not really what his mind was on. His attitude to the world at large was one of polite resignation, but those small areas of it trodden by Hilda Manthony Toddles passionately worshipped. He had begun bombarding her with splendid confessions of love quite early in their friendship, but whether Hilda preserved these corpulent envelopes or not, her replies were always couched in the same disarming terms.

"My Dear Toddles," she used to write, "it was so kind of you to let me see in advance this passage from your new book. I feel that I am a Favoured Personage. I shall expect a complimentary copy when the novel is published, for I am now greatly intrigued to learn whether the flinty-hearted heroine takes pity on the gallant little man in the end.—Your unchanging friend, HILDA MANTHONY."

Toddles would press his lips reverently to the signature, thrust the missive into the pocket nearest his heart, swear at Fate with extraordinary fluency, and take up his long-suffering quill to delineate the stately sweetnesses of Hilda in yet another radiant romance of life and love.

LOOKING at Hilda Manthony as she sat opposite her devoted friend, Audrey Appleton, over a tiny table in the smoke-lounge of the Prawners' Hotel, an onlooker might have pardoned even Toddles's wildest outburst, for she was a veritable flower of Anglo-Saxon womanhood.

Miss Appleton was taking her friend to task with unusual severity.

"I tell you solemnly, Hilda," she cried, slapping the lid of a tortoise-shell cigarette-box which rested between them, "if it was anybody else I should call it downright caddish. The poor little wretch is dying by half-inches."

"No, dear," replied her friend, coolly, "living by half-inches. If I sent him away for good, he might carry out his much-repeated threat, and rob the world of quite a useful little life. If, on the other hand, I married him——"

"And why not?" burst out Miss Appleton.

"For two reasons, my dear. Firstly, because Toddles does not love me, and, secondly, because I love Toddles."

"Please don't be clever with me, dear," said Audrey, with acid sweetness. "We're supposed to be pals, you know. Keep it for Lady Slinger's and Brook Street, though, candidly, I don't fancy the gods had the Aspasia model in mind when they planned you."

"Go on, dear, if it relieves you," replied Miss Manthony; "but I'll tell you a thing of two which may blow a little of the fog out or your wits. Toddles, I say, does *not* love me. He thinks he does, but he's wrong. I know him all through, and I know that queer little temperament of his. To such men, a hopeless, artistic attachment is the very breath of their beings. Toddles worships me, if you like, but that's all. I'm a beautiful ideal he tries to live up to. If I married him, he would find me out in a month: the ideal would be shattered, and Toddles would sink, disillusioned and crushed. He is not a strong man, and not a perfectly good one: like most artists, he has a streak of the sensual in him, and a broad band of the selfish. Once destroy that rosy image he makes of me, and the bad undercurrents will work their way to the surface in no time. No, dear, it would be brutal and immoral for me to marry Toddles."

"And yet," cried Audrey, "you say you love him!"

"I think so," replied Hilda, "but I may be mistaken. I don't know why people imagine that every woman must inevitably love somebody, and I am pretty certain that thousands of women, married and maids, go from the cradle to the grave without ever loving at all. But I don't think I am one of them. I love Toddles. But for Heaven's sake don't ask me why."

Miss Appleton took a cigarette and lit it, firmly, in the strong manner of one whose mind is made up.

"Listen to me, my dear," she said. "I'll lay you a fiver I can prove that Toddles loves you."

"Done," said Hilda, quietly, "and make it a tenner if you like."

"No," said her friend, "I don't want to impoverish you. This is my proposal. Toddles shall escort us round the pier to-morrow, when you will suddenly grow interested to know how piers are made. We shall

go down to the platform where the steamboat crowds land, and you will be leaning over the chains with an air of wonderfully simulated curiosity, when your foot will slip on the iron grating, and over you will go into the English Channel. Toddles will be after you like a bullet, and if that isn't proof positive he loves you, I don't know what is."

"Not a bit of it, my dear. It's proof of nothing of the sort. Why, that is just one of the limelit moments Toddles has been gloating over in the secrecy of his soul ever since he met me. But I *will* take your wager all the same, for if you want to know, Toddles won't go the plunge. The sudden shock will be too much for him. Heroic scenes like that go well in the imagination—especially such an imagination as Toddles's; but when it comes to the real thing, he will lose his head altogether. He will dance about, distracted, shrieking for help and presenting the comic picture of a man trying to run and pull his boots off at the same time. Meanwhile, his great chance will slip away from him, and it is probably some grimy, primitive soul of a pier-hand who will haul me out with a length of tarry rope. But still, if you insist on throwing money away——"

And their hands met over the tortoise-shell cigarette-box, clinching the bet.

THE day might have been one of midspring. The bland, westering sun fell slantwise across the light south wind, chafing out all the chill, while as for the sea, any experienced eye could have seen that he was in a good humour and warm. There were few people on the sea-front and hardly any on the pier. It was too late in the season for people. Most of Shingleford's visitors have departed by the end of September, while it is at this period that Hilda and Audrey usually arrive. They do not like crowds. Toddles, on the other hand, neither likes nor dislikes them. He does not judge places that way. He defines them into heavenly and hellish ones, the former being those which contain Hilda Manthony.

At two-thirty-five sharp, Hilda was overtaken by a sudden curiosity in the matter of modern pier-construction. This mood would have seemed strange to anyone else, but Toddles was not in the habit of questioning Hilda's wants or analysing her motives. She just wanted a thing—that was enough. Had she expressed a desire for the moon, Toddles would have methodically bought up every known book on astronomy and sat down to work out the possibilities.

The trio descended to the lower platform, and Toddles, rapidly mustering his whole knowledge of the theme in hand, began enlightening the ladies on the comparative merits of pile-driving by steam or hand-pulleys, the imperviousness of pitch-pine to salt-water-rot, the protective virtues of paint, Stockholm tar and creosote, and the perfect indispensability of a rock-bottom. His eloquence grew on him, and he had turned away to illustrate a certain point by calling attention to another part of the structure, when the comedy happened. It was well for the conspirators that Toddles was looking the other way, for Hilda's fall was painfully unconvincing. The next instant was big with three things—a scream from Audrey Appleton, a splash in the sea, and a flying leap by Toddles. Toddles had seized his great chance. Moreover, he had seized it so promptly, that a careless observer might have sworn that the pair of them struck the water together; but whereas Hilda had fallen, Toddles had leapt, so that when he rose to the surface it took him half-a-dozen floundering, ill-swum strokes to reach the object of his life's devotions.

Once in the water, Hilda set herself to the task of drowning with as much safety and verisimilitude as possible. She was a fair swimmer, a good one in comparison with most ladies, and a Webb-and-Burgess rolled into one compared with Toddles. In all the circumstances, you would have said that there could be no hitch, but there was. An abominable thing happened. Hilda was apt to bless it in after years, but now she could have thrown aside her maidenly restraint and cursed it into the gulfs of perdition. She was seized with a paralysing cramp. Her sinking—the first of the traditional three—was perfectly involuntary, and when she rose to the surface and genuinely cried for help, Audrey Appleton saw that something was amiss, and turned her own half-hearted screams into shrieks of real earnest. At this point, Toddles, already in vast difficulties through the weight of his own clothes and heavy clout shoes, reached Hilda and seized the neck of her blouse, but the flimsy material came away in his hand, and she sank again. Now was the grand moment of Toddles's life. He allowed himself to submerge—there was no difficulty whatever about this—thrust a frantic arm down towards Hilda, and felt his fingers entangle in her hair. Then the great love that he had for her lent his exhausted little frame the buoyant might of a whale. With three stupendous leg-kicks he gained the surface, and looked wildly above him. A life-line hissed across his face. Toddles snapped at it madly with his teeth, missed it, and swallowed incalculable draughts of salt water. But the rope had coiled round his shoulder, and his free hand instinctively grasped it. He felt himself sinking again, sinking and sinking miles into the depths of the sea, while the weight below him and

"Toddles had seized his great chance so promptly that a careless observer might have sworn that the pair of them struck the water together."

the pull from above seemed to be tearing his body asunder: the booming in his ears rose to a terrific climax; then oblivion.

HILDA MANTHONY sat deep in the deepest arm-chair to be found in the Prawners' Hotel, and toasted her shapely feet—the subject of well over a dozen flowery odes by Toddles—before a big fire. Miss Appleton, in the intervals between rearranging the cushions and blankets for her friend, was brewing whisky-toddy, to which Hilda had consented with the qualification that it was unsexed, but highly medicinal. Audrey was adding the sugar, when the door behind them opened, and a pale, shivering, shock-headed, dressing-gowned, woollen-slippered figure entered.

"Toddles," cried Hilda, with an imperious turn of her head, "get back to bed at once, or I'll report you to the doctor!"

"Oh, that ass," replied Toddles, with hoarse amiability; "he thinks I'm ill." (A copious sneeze.) "These country practitioners are awful fools, you know. I came down to see if you were all right, Hilda. I do hope you aren't going to be any the worse for your ducking."

He winced, and plied a large pocket-handkerchief savagely. The hero with cold-in-the-head deserves our deepest sympathy.

"There, there, what a wilful little man it is," said Hilda, relenting. "Well, if you must kill yourself, draw a chair up to the fire and have some grog."

"Thanks, no end," said the rescuer, mixing himself a potent draught. "Ugh! It *is* medicine to me, anyhow!"

It suddenly occurred to them both that Audrey Appleton had vanished. Hilda laid a hand on Toddles's shoulder.

"Toddles," she said, "I haven't had a chance yet to thank you for pulling me out of the sea."

The hero trembled violently at her touch, and flushed to the roots of his hair.

"Don't, Hilda," he stammered. "You know very well I should have gone in just the same for anybody else."

"I know, now, Toddles, that you would. But I've a horrible confession to make to you. *It wasn't an accident!*"

"No," said Toddles, gazing sadly into the red coals, "it was a conspiracy."

"What," she cried, starting up out of her chair, "has Audrey told you?"

"No," he said, "nobody told me. I didn't want telling. I saw it all out of the skirt of my eye, and frankly, Hilda, people don't fall into the sea that way. Besides, I knew something was in the wind when you came down in the fashions of last year but one."

"What do you know about what I wear, Toddles?" she asked.

"Everything," he said, simply. "I could tell you every dress you've worn since I first met you, and how you looked in each one, too. I couldn't describe them in modiste's lingo, of course, but I should know them if I saw them again."

"Why do you take such an interest in me, Toddles, when I've been such a cad to you?"

Toddles rose to his feet.

"I won't listen to talk like that, Hilda," he said. "If we two stood on the edge of hell and you threw me into the flames, my only feeling would be pride that you should so far concern yourself with me. If I haven't made you know that by now, it isn't my fault. But there must be no more foolery like to-day's. My God, Hilda, if you had gone under!"

He buried his face in his hands, with a fearful shudder.

"What would you have done, Toddles, without me?"

"There wouldn't have been such a question to ask," he said, quietly. There was a depth in his words which Hilda had never heard before.

They looked into one another's eyes for fully a minute, and a strange beauty rose in the face of Hilda Manthony, a vision of all the exquisite human loveliness blended and transfigured with the light of another sphere. Toddles saw it, and his blood was flowing fire in his veins. The piston-blows of his great little heart wellnigh struck him down, and he quivered and swayed like a sapling in the gales of March. She held her beautiful hands half-way out to him, and Toddles, falling rather than kneeling, seized them and kissed them wildly, muttering incoherent worship to Heaven and to Hilda. She then disengaged her hands tenderly, and leaning forward, drew his face to her and kissed him once on the lips. Then, sinking back into the chair with a great sigh, she closed her eyes, and a tear lay, eloquent and unashamed, on the glorious curve of her cheek. Toddles subsequently immortalized that single, sacred tear in an epic poem, which Hilda, its only reader, told him on their wedding day was a work superior to the Paradise Regained.

The many friends of Hilda and Toddles were lost in delight at the wonderful array of presents on show-morning, but it was widely remarked, with surprise, that there was no gift bearing the name of Audrey Appleton, bridesmaid, among them. It was Hilda's idea that Miss Appleton's offering should take the form of amnesty in the matter of a certain never-sufficiently-to-be-beautified wager. The only person who shares their secret is Toddles, and he won't let it go any farther.

THE LOSER WHO WON

A Lawn Tennis Story

by

SYDNEY HORLER

ILLUSTRATED BY E. F. SHERIE

WOMAN-LIKE, she attacked without warning.

"May I ask why you have taken such an unwarrantable liberty in connection with me?" she asked, fine scorn on her lips, but bitter resentment in her splendid eyes.

John Kenyon came up to meet the attack as a soldier pulls himself together to salute.

"I am not aware that I have taken any such liberty, Miss Deane," he replied, stiffly. His steady glance challenged her burning wrath.

Little banners of rage flamed in the girl's cheeks.

"How dare you deny it?" she cried.

"Deny what?" Kenyon was naturally an even-tempered man, but this bewildering show of anger on the part of a girl with whom he had spent so many happy hours of sporting companionship amazed him. Also, because he knew himself to be entirely innocent of any such charge, he felt the accusation all the more. Loving a girl in the case of John Kenyon did not excuse an exhibition of unwarrantable temper. He felt he would like to shake the tempestuous shoulders of the beautiful creature before him—even if he kissed the twitching lips afterwards. There was a certain hint of the primeval in him as he stood regarding her.

"Do you deny that you had nothing to do with—*this?*" She flung her arm forward impulsively, and, looking, Kenyon saw that she was holding a newspaper cutting.

"Am I to take it?"

Mona Deane flushed deeper.

"Considering that the 'information' seems to have come from you—yes," she said.

Although he felt he would like to add a good smacking to the original shaking, Kenyon gave no sign of emotion as he took the cutting. Smoothing it out, he read:—

THINGS I HEAR.

That when a certain distinguished young novelist goes abroad in the autumn in search of local colour for his next book, there is a chance of his being accompanied by a certain charming young lady, well known in local sporting circles, who will share his name in addition to the many triumphs she has already shared with him on the lawn-tennis courts. The information comes to me from a thoroughly reliable source.

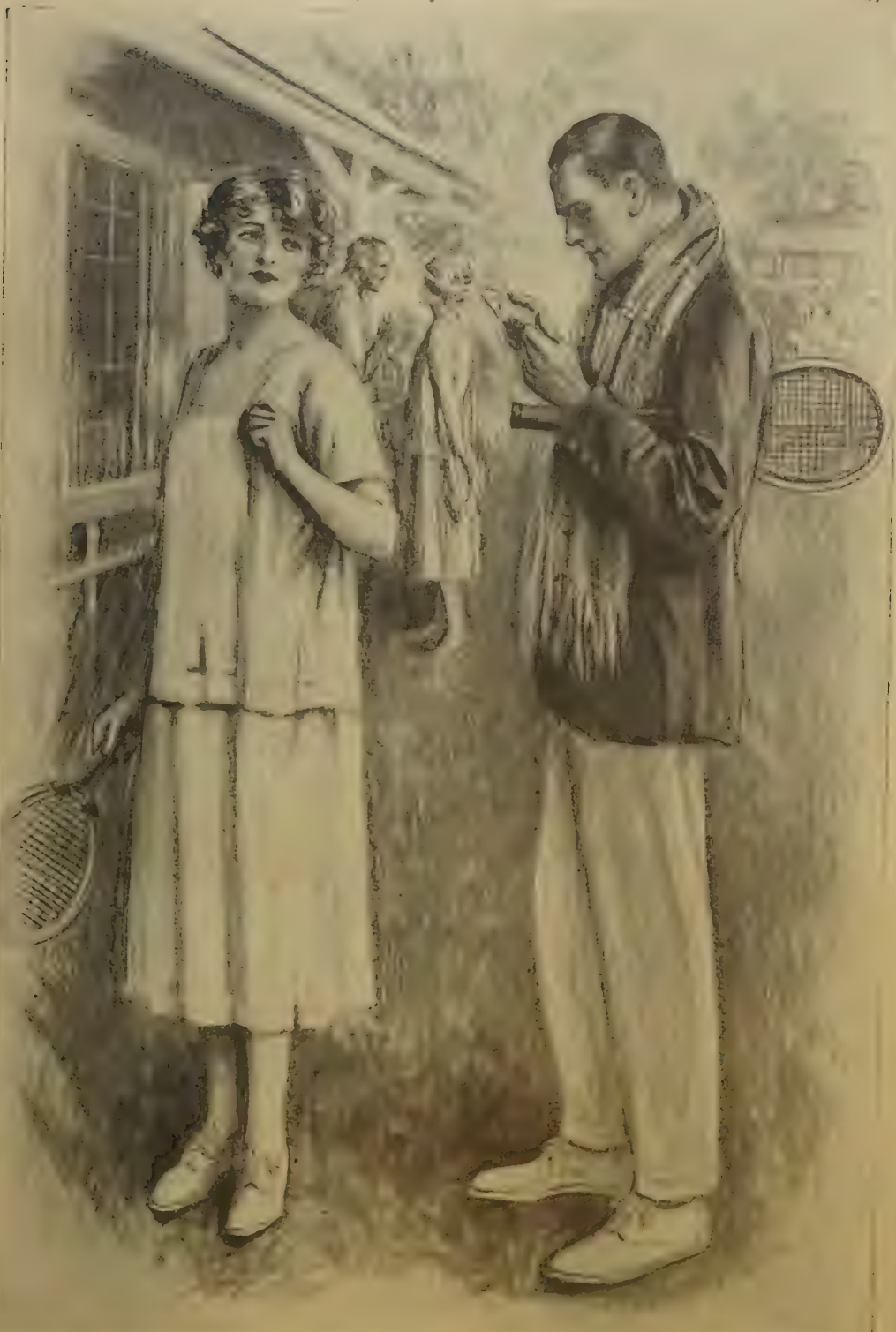
"Highly interesting!" commented Kenyon, acidly. "And you say you can trace my hand in this abomination! Will you please to tell me why?"

His look of anger threatened to sober the girl; but her flaming spirit carried her on.

"It is well known that that column of ridiculous flapdoodle is written by young Roy Davidson. You are a close friend of Davidson's, aren't you? Besides, 'a thoroughly reliable source'! But"—in a tone of mocking bitterness—"I think you should have consulted me before committing me to a tour on the Continent with a man who has never even made love to me! You say the paragraph is abominable; I consider your action is worse than abominable!"

It was clear that the anger of the girl had caused her to lose all sense of proportion, of common sense, even of justice. At least that was how it struck the man she was accusing. But because he wished to be perfectly fair, he replied evenly: "Davidson comes to my rooms certainly; but to suggest that I gave him authority to print a paragraph of this description is so perfectly preposterous that I shall not even trouble to deny it!"

The girl's rage burst into fresh flame at this. The thought of the flood of innuendoes which she knew would come to her ears before many more hours had passed tempted her to do something desperate. She stamped her foot and glared—there is no other word—at the man she felt had so contemptibly



"To suggest that I gave Davidson authority to print a paragraph of this description is so perfectly preposterous that I shall not even trouble to deny it!"

abused her friendship—and (the shame whipped her cheeks) something more than friendship.

The man stared back. His firm jaw jutted out like a rock. There was a glint in the grey eyes. Kenyon looked as angry as the girl herself by this time—but infinitely more dangerous.

Indeed, the man was possessed by an anger which threatened to swamp even his iron self-control. This passion was aroused, not so much by the girl's resentment towards him because his name had been coupled with hers—this, in the circumstances, he told himself, was natural enough—but by the girl's staggering charge and the lack of faith which it indicated.

"If you won't deny it——," started the girl, determinedly.

"Yes?" finished the man, with aggravating coldness.

"I must come to my own conclusions," said Mona Deane.

"I can only hope that they will be more sensible ones than those to which you have already given expression!" replied Kenyon, icily.

Stamping her foot imperiously once again, the girl turned quickly away.

"I think," she said, over her shoulder, "I think that I hate you!"

"I will remove my hateful presence!" said John Kenyon, and he, too, turned—in the opposite direction.

Although he followed the mild and spiritless occupation of novel-writing, there was a masterfulness about John Kenyon which marked him out from his fellow-men. It is significant that he was known among his male intimates as the "Cave man."

Honesty and sincerity were his two outstanding characteristics, if one excepts a frankness which was so direct as to be often embarrassing, and even, on occasion, brutal.

He had no use for subterfuge of any description; women had to shed their petty meannesses in dealing with him, for he treated them in the same direct way as he did men. In consequence he was not a favourite among the feminines; he had startled many a dovecote at the Waverley Lawn Tennis Club, even if the brilliance of his play had created a sensation.

Kenyon applied an acid-test to a man or a woman before he admitted the other to his full friendship. He did not do so through an overweening conceit of himself, but because he would not waste time on the paltry.

It was this trait in his character that caused him to feel more bitterly towards the girl than towards the youth who had written that abominable paragraph. When Mona Deane's flushed and angry face loomed up before his mind's eye, he experienced a sense of intense disappointment. Her fault, he told himself, was greater than Davidson's, for whereas the young reporter had merely committed a blazing indiscretion, Mona Deane had accused him of being a liar, if not something worse.

With the self-centred outlook of a strong man, Kenyon did not stop to consider the feelings which had swayed the girl; which had caused her to speak as she did—bitterly, recklessly. It was enough for him that the girl who had grown day by day in his confidence, and whom he had placed so high above all other women that she might have belonged to a third sex, had shown herself paltry in the moment of testing—paltry because she believed him capable of doing that which he held utterly despicable.

Walking swiftly home to his rooms after that disturbing interview, he came to his decision. Another man would have done the obvious thing—he would have gone straight to the home of the writer of the paragraph, have caught him by the collar, dragged him into the presence of Mona Deane, and made him swear that he (Kenyon) had nothing to do with the veiled insinuation that the two leading players in the Waverley Lawn Tennis Club shortly contemplated matrimony.

Kenyon himself would have done this if he could have gained satisfaction from the act. But with him the wound went deeper; even after Davidson had confessed, he would not have been content. Nothing could remove the hurt he felt that the girl had not had sufficient faith in him; had believed him capable, first of all of holding her up to public talk, and secondly of telling her a lie.

Inexplicable as it may seem, Kenyon wasted little thought on Davidson. The young reporter had played, according to his thinking, a minor part in this wretched affair.

Still, the thing must be put a stop to. Calling at Davidson's lodgings, he inquired for the reporter.

"Mr. Davidson was taken violently and suddenly ill early this morning and had to be removed to the Northfield Infirmary. Appendicitis, I believe I heard the doctor say, sir."

"I'm awfully sorry!" replied John Kenyon.

Arrived home, he telephoned to the Institution, and later wrote a letter to the patient. It was a letter of sympathy, and contained no reproaches.

Later, he wrote a private letter to the Editor of the local *Gazette*.

Later still, he packed his bags.

THE Hollywood Lawn Tennis Club welcomed the new-comer with open arms. The fame of John Kenyon had spread over a far wider area than the twenty miles which separated the Waverley and Hollywood Clubs, and the latter organization was always open to receive strong men players, especially if they had undeniable social references.

"Very glad you have joined us—very glad!" said Edgeley, the secretary; "with the County Championships so near we can do with you very well, Mr. Kenyon. This year we really ought to stand a good chance of pulling off some of the big events. You know," he added, in the manner of a man confiding a State secret, "we're a tennis club that really plays tennis, instead of holding Pink Teas, and getting highly unsuitable young couples engaged!"

"I rarely drink tea, and the other sort of thing doesn't interest me!" replied Kenyon, briefly. "I'm glad you're so keen on the game here; tennis is my hobby."

In the weeks that followed, the new member showed that lawn tennis with him was something more than a hobby; it was a gift. As in other sports, there is such a thing as an instinct for the game, and Kenyon proved unmistakably that he possessed it. In addition to a highly-dangerous service and a wonderful cross-court drive which he seemed to be able to "place" to an inch, he had the faculty of being invariably in the right place to thwart the designs of his opponent. Only men who have the real genius for the game possess this attribute.

The excellent practice he got at his new club stimulated his already great interest in the game, and improved his play. Within a fortnight he was easily the strongest man in the club.

Edgeley, a slight, short man, with a permanent limp but an unbounded enthusiasm, watched the new-comer with the complacent air that a hen might watch a favourite and forward chick. And as he watched, he chuckled. The playing prowess of Hollywood was almost a religion to this born secretary; debarred from actual participation in the game, Edgeley's superabundant energy was devoted to making Hollywood the strongest playing organization in the county.

One day he stopped Kenyon as the latter came swinging off the courts with that easy athletic stride which made him so noticeable a figure.

"I hope you are all right for Westchester, Kenyon?" he asked, anxiously. "No special work on, or anything of that sort?"

"No; I've been working off some arrears mornings and nights lately; I hope to be quite free," was the reassuring reply.

The lean secretary touched his star player impulsively on the shoulder.

"We ought to take the men's singles, and have a chance with the men's doubles!" he said. "It's a pity we are rather weak in ladies, but Miss Stowell is the best girl we've got. She will play with you in the mixed. By the way, I hope you don't mind entering for this as well as the other events?"

"Not at all. Tennis, as I told you once, I believe, is my hobby." The tone was level and non-committal.

"We shall give the Waverley people—your old crowd—a surprise—what?" chuckled Edgeley.

"Perhaps!" replied the other, with an indifference that went straight to the secretary's heart.

"Funny devil!" muttered Edgeley, as he turned away. "Nothing seems to move that chap!"

Edgeley may have been—indeed he was—an excellent secretary of a prominent lawn tennis club, but as a psychologist he had things to learn. It was because he really felt moved that John Kenyon had replied so indifferently.

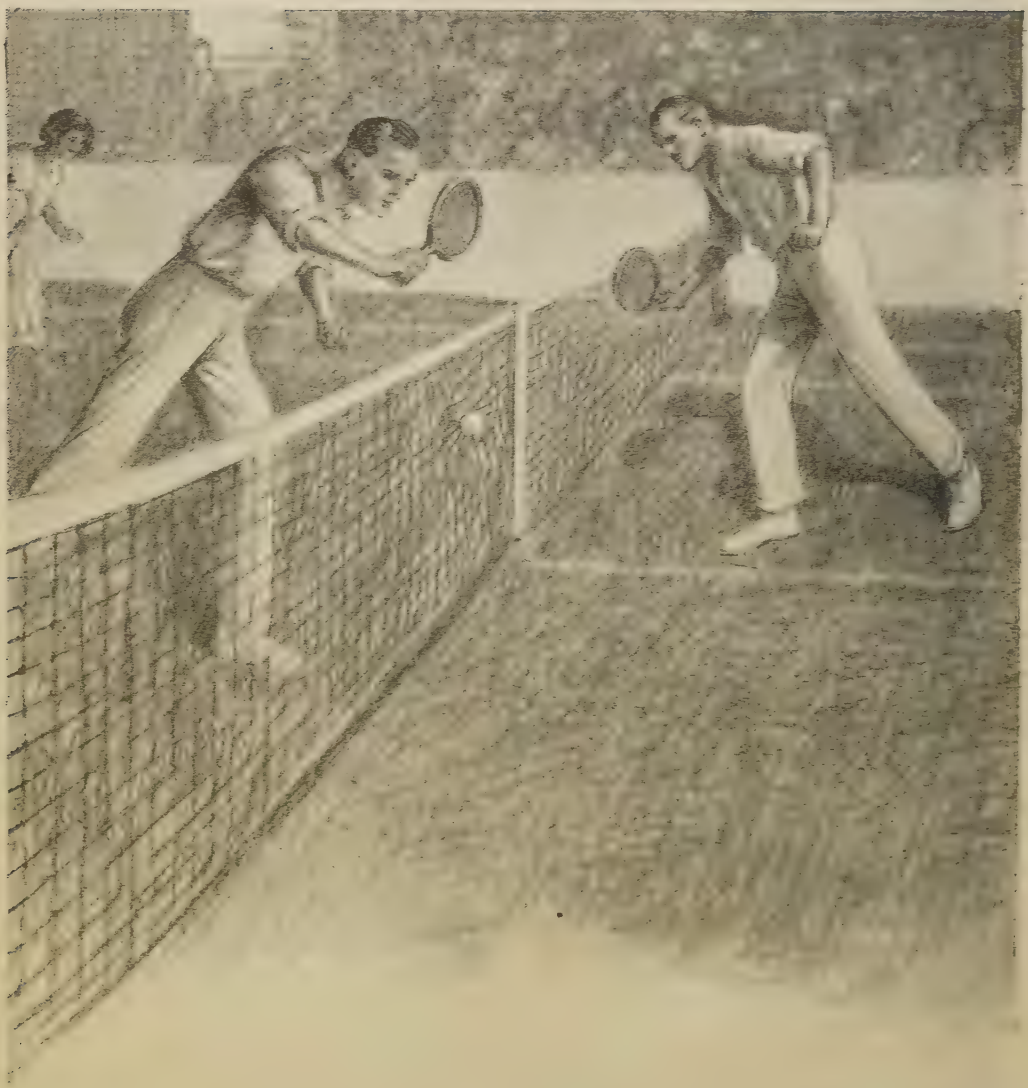
Last year he had won the County Mixed Doubles at Westchester—and Mona Deane had been his partner! Such a splendid player would be bound to be competing again this year. He wondered what man she would play with; and, wondering, Kenyon found himself seized by an unaccountable annoyance.

Lighting a cigarette, he tried to analyse this feeling. Why should he feel annoyed because a girl who had treated him in such a fashion was entering a tennis tournament with another man but himself for her partner?

He found the answer. But the solution seemed to enrage him the more. Flinging his cigarette down, he ground it beneath his heel.

JOHN KENYON brought his racket round in a graceful sweep; there was a reassuring *ping* as the white ball was finely hit—and the final for the County Mixed Doubles had commenced.

Crowded round the clearly-marked court that looked like a patch of green velvet in that molten sunlight, the great gaily-dressed throng leaned forward, intent on every stroke. There is latent drama in every big sporting event, and in this case the match



' I call it contemptible !' she replied—and deliberately drove

had an added piquant flavour, for last year's winners were now—antagonists !

The unseen gods who juggle with human pawns had wrought this thing. Even though he was handicapped by a comparatively weak partner, Kenyon had fought his way to the final by sheer brilliance.

It was inevitable, too, that Mona Deane and Melville Sands would also reach the final of the Mixed Doubles. The girl was away in a class by herself, while Sands fought like a tiger for every point, and, after finding the weak spot in the opposing pair, played ruthlessly on it until the match was won. Together they had ploughed through the opposition.

I have said—and every sporting enthusiast knows the words to be true—that there is latent drama in every important match, whether the game be fought out in the boxing-ring, the football or cricket field, the golf course, or the courts of lawn tennis. Few of those, however, who watched the chosen champions of the Waverley and Hollywood Clubs battling for supremacy realized the real feelings that were animating the players.

Emotions that had little to do with lawn tennis were making Mona Deane feel shaky in that glaring arena, but her sporting spirit —a priceless heritage from her forefathers— forced her to concentrate her mind on the game.

Her partner, Melville Sands, sandy-haired, crafty-eyed, had harnessed his will to one

the next ball into the net. There was no mistaking the action."

thought: the beating of the man opposed to him. He knew that Kenyon and Mona Deane had had some sort of a row after that paragraph had appeared in the *Gazette*, and his twisted reasoning led him to think that if he could humiliate Kenyon by defeating him he would stand well in the beautiful Irish girl's favour.

And Kenyon? What were his thoughts? He knew Sands and his kind, and he meant to win because he detested the man personally, and detested still more the thought that he was associated with the girl whose every movement was a stab at his own heart.

It had been a trying week for even such an iron man as John Kenyon. The days had been packed with poignant moments. Although he had kept a great deal to himself, he had unavoidably found himself face to face on several occasions with Mona Deane.

His will forced him merely to bow coldly when common politeness demanded it, but it had cost him a good deal to walk on then as though the girl had really passed out of his life. She had—but God! at what a price!

"*Forty—fifteen!*"

The voice of the umpire stabbed the silence.

Sands sent over a scorching service. Kenyon's partner made no attempt to play it; the task of speeding that ball back over the net was too much for her. Already, she looked like crumpling beneath the strain of

this big occasion. There was a faint burst of applause, denoting that the Waverley representatives had won the first game.

They won also the first set. It was heart-rending to see a fine player like Kenyon fighting against such uneven odds. His partner was obviously outclassed, and even his brilliance was not sufficient to stem the tide which had set so firmly against the hopes of Hollywood.

Once, when changing courts, he caught Mona Deane's eye. The girl was looking at him sympathetically. He would have given a great deal to know what lay behind that look; what feelings had prompted it.

Through his favourite stroke, a cross-court drive that gave the ball the speed of a bullet, Kenyon secured the first game in the second set. The sympathies of the crowd were clearly with him by this time, and a volleying cheer echoed round the ground as Sands made an ineffectual attempt to take the ball which went whizzing past him in a little cloud of whitewash.

The cheers made Sands show his teeth. It was an unpleasant sight, just as the play which followed was unpleasant to those whose sense of sportsmanship triumphed over their partisanship. For even if it was good tennis strategy, it was scarcely "the game."

True to his nature, Sands, having found the weakness of his opponents, exploited it; he played continuously on Kenyon's partner. The latter, already overawed by the importance of the occasion, and feeling acutely conscious that she was letting her partner down badly, fell to pieces. She fumbled like a novice, sending ball after ball into the net.

Sands became jaunty again. Flushed with success, he resorted to questionable tactics. Once Kenyon was palpably not ready for the service which his opponent sent over without any preliminary warning, even although, acting on instinct, he made a hopeless, belated swing at the ball. As the referee, hard-bound by the rules, was forced to debit the point against him, Kenyon shrugged his shoulders expressively. The crowd, understanding the gesture, shared his contempt for a man who allowed himself so far to forget the most simple ethics of sportsmanship.

Yet the man on the other side of the net was elated.

"Easy!" whispered Melville Sands, as he stooped to gather a ball.

A flush stained the tan in Mona Deane's cheeks.

"I call it contemptible!" she replied—and deliberately drove the next ball into the net.

There was no mistaking the action. But no one understood what lay behind that deliberate mis-stroke so well as the man on the other side of the net.

John Kenyon felt a thrill pass through him. When the players next changed sides, he sought Mona Deane's glance and gave her back look for look. It was not possible for either of them to misunderstand that communion of the eyes.

In that moment Mona Deane and John Kenyon came closer to each other than they had ever been before. The thought came to them intuitively how much each had missed through the circumstance which had made them drift in opposite ways. They should still have been playing together.

A wave of regret passed through the girl. With the incident of the foul service fresh in her mind, she realized how criminally short-sighted she had been to think even for a minute that such a man as Kenyon could have been capable of a mean action, of anything underhanded. The man was a sportsman. He had proved that by accepting the referee's decision over that debatable point without question. If only she could condone for the past!

As for Kenyon, his mind became flooded with memories. How thoroughly this girl and he had understood each other, even before, on his side, friendship had strengthened into something deeper! Those sunlit afternoons of the short ago—how happy they had been!

Unaware of the feelings that were swaying two at least of the players, the crowd shifted in their seats, hoping against hope that the tide would turn, and that Hollywood would get at least a set. The sight of that stern-jawed man in the well-worn flannels playing such a lone hand was really depressing, even if at the same time it was wonderfully stimulating.

Transfixed, they remained motionless, fascinated by the remarkable game which the man on whom all interest was focused was playing. From this point, indeed, Kenyon appeared to assume a mastery of the court, and, encouraged and strengthened by the example he set, his partner improved.

The second set went to Hollywood. The score was 8—6, and the struggle was Homeric.

Mona Deane, fascinated by the wonderful display of her former partner, watched with questing eyes Kenyon talking encouragingly to the girl playing with him. Then she looked at Melville Sands. The man was scowling.

"You were a bit weak on your back hand, Miss Deane, in that last set, if you don't mind my mentioning it," he said, unpleasantly.

"But I do mind!" Mona Deane retorted, annoyed beyond endurance at having her

musings about Kenyon (what a contrast he was to this contemptible pot-hunter!) broken into. She turned abruptly away.

Smothering an oath, Melville Sands concentrated his mind upon the third set, on the result of which hung the issue.

Seeing him standing at the net, his racket held as though it were a weapon, and a relentless expression on his unpleasant face, Grace Stowell became unnerved once more. Once again the importance of the game overawed her.

In spite of the efforts at self-control which she made, Sands' baleful glance seemed to fascinate her as a bird is fascinated by a snake; even when she did contrive to return Mona Deane's service, she lobbed the ball meekly to Sands for the latter to "kill" it ruthlessly.

It was heartbreaking to see this slaughter, but, his back against the wall, Kenyon strove, like a superman. Whatever anxiety he may have felt was not shown in his perfect service, his brilliant volleying, or in that superb drive from one corner of the court to the other, which was twice out of every three times a winning stroke. Round after round of cheers greeted his soul-stirring display, even while it seemed inevitable that he would be beaten.

With the games standing at 5—3 in Waverley's favour, and with Sands serving, the men and women who had watched a man fighting against his fate groaned beneath their breath. The end was imminent.

Yet still Kenyon struggled. It was hard to go down before a man like Sands. He countered the latter's services with unplayable returns. These dazzling shots aroused a faint hope once more, but the Waverley strategist, facing for the last time the girl he had apparently mesmerized, drove over a ball that everyone knew she could only grope for feebly, blindly.

Cheers volleyed out over the court—but there were more for the man who had lost than for the man who had won.

In leaving the court, the four players found themselves close together.

"I'm sorry—ever so sorry!" A hand touched John Kenyon's arm; a voice broken with dismay made him turn.

"Awfully good pair against us, Miss Stowell—we did quite well. I'm sure Edgeley will agree!" Kenyon smiled into the girl's face, pretending not to see her misery.

Mona Deane saw the smile and guessed what the words were. She lingered behind instead of going on with her partner to receive congratulations.

Kenyon allowed Grace Stowell to pass, and then lingered also.

"Congratulations!" he said, gravely.

"*Don't!*" replied the girl, tensely. "I think this has been the most terrible afternoon of my life! Where can I see you?" she went on hurriedly. "I must see you somewhere alone—I have something I want to tell you."

THE waiter brought the coffee and silently withdrew. As he went, a flicker of a smile passed over his mask of a face. He had spent many seasons at that famous Thames Valley Hotel, and knew the signs. Moreover, he thought he had never seen a more beautiful girl.

To the girl and man, sitting in the arbour on the edge of a lawn that stretched its velvet length down to the gently-sighing river, came the scent of summer roses. In some magic way it mixed with the fragrance of the girl's hair, turning Kenyon faint with desire.

"What is it you want to tell me?" he asked.

Mona Deane toyed with her wisp of a handkerchief. Yet she spoke unfalteringly.

"I want to tell you that I am sorry—have been sorry ever since I knew the truth," she said. "I know now it was ridiculous and contemptible of me to think that you were the type of man who would gossip unwarrantably about a girl just for the sake of a little cheap notoriety, or because you fancied you had made a conquest of someone who had told you she admired your books. If I had not known this before," the girl continued, "I should have learned it this afternoon—what happened in the match would have told me. But I became frantically angry when I read that paragraph in the *Gazette* for the first time; all I could seem to remember was that you were a friend of the youth who was known to write that particular column. I want to tell you, also, that it was my temper which made me say the things I did. I am sorry!"

"It was my temper that would not allow me to give you a decent and straightforward denial," answered Kenyon. "I am sorry, too. Let me tell you now what I would not tell you then: I had no more to do with the compilation of that abominable paragraph than you did yourself. As a matter of fact, I wrote privately to the Editor of the paper the night I went away, telling him that the paragraph was unfounded, but that I did not want to get Davidson into any trouble. Didn't the Editor publish a denial?"

"I believe so; but I didn't see it myself. I was so upset that I wouldn't look at the wretched paper, and father stopped having it at the house. And the denial did not make matters easier for me—if you were a woman instead of a man, you would understand what I mean by that!"

"Beastly!" muttered Kenyon, understanding, even if he were only a man. "But I do want you to believe that I did what I thought was best—for you. And, as I told you before, I had absolutely nothing to do with that abominable first paragraph."

"I know!" answered the girl happily. "Some time after you—you had gone away, the boy Davidson wrote to me. He had heard, he said, that something he had written had caused me annoyance, and he wanted to say how sorry he was. He added that he would not have written it at all but that he believed the facts were true. He got the 'news' from my sister, he said."

Noting the look of perplexity on her hearer's face, she hurried on.

"What I am going to tell you now requires a little courage," she continued, with a shaky laugh, "but to explain properly I have to tell you.

"My sister Mary is the *enfant terrible* of the family. She is a flapper of the most disconcerting description. Unbeknown to any of us, she has made the acquaintance of young Roy Davidson, and it is true that she gave that information to him. When she realized what harm she had done, she was afraid to tell me until I dragged the facts from her."

"But——?"

"Be patient a little longer. And please do not look at me so hard, for this is the moment when I want all my courage!

"One day Mary was teasing me about you. She said we must be in love with each other because we always played tennis together, and because you took me occasionally to the theatre.

"'When Mr. Kenyon goes away to write his next book, I'll bet you'll be going with him!' she said, like the dreadful child she is.

"It was such a terrible thing for a child to say that I suppose I must have blushed. In any case, I know I was too astounded to make any sensible reply. But young Davidson ought to have had more sense——" she wound up somewhat lamely.

The strong face of John Kenyon was softened by a smile.

"Davidson is reported to be very keen on local news. Of course, he should have come to me for verification of the report. But in a letter he sent me, he explained why he didn't; he said he considered it was such a delicate matter that he didn't like to do so! Whereupon I wrote him a long letter full of good, sound advice, in the course of which I told him that he would be well advised not to print anything in the future which he considered too delicate to mention to the parties concerned!

"But, boy-like, I really think he was trying to do me what he thought was a kindness. Well, one good turn deserves another. Suppose we give him some *real* news this time?"

He leaned towards her and, in the masterful way of John Kenyon, took her in his arms. Perhaps it was because she was so surprised that the girl did not struggle. Instead, she meekly faltered, "What do you mean?"

"I propose to tell Davidson that Mr. and Mrs. John Kenyon are shortly starting for Italy, where the former proposes to write his next novel! Have you any objection?"

Mona Deane snuggled closer.

IMPORTANT!

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E. PHILLIPS OPPENHEIM

"PAVING THE WAY FOR MABEL"

by

P. G. Wodehouse

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"HER eyes," said Bill Brewster, "are like—like—what's the word I want?"

He looked across at Lucille, his sister, and at Archie Moffam, her husband. Lucille was leaning forward with an eager and interested face; Archie was leaning back with his finger-tips together and his eyes closed. This was not the first time his brother-in-law had touched on the subject of the girl he had become engaged to marry during his trip to England. Indeed, Brother Bill had touched on very little else in the course of the past week, and Archie, though of a sympathetic nature, was beginning to feel that he had heard all he wished to hear about Mabel Winchester. Lucille, on the other hand, who was now getting her first instalment of it, was absorbed. She was devoted to Bill, and his recital had thrilled her.

"Like——" said Bill. "Like——"

"Stars?" suggested Lucille.

"Stars," said Bill, gratefully. "Exactly the word. Twin stars shining in a clear sky on a summer night. Her teeth are like—what shall I say?"

"Pearls?"

"Pearls. And her hair is a lovely brown, like leaves in the autumn. In fact," concluded Bill, slipping down from the heights with something of a jerk, "she's a corker. Isn't she, Archie?"

Archie opened his eyes.

"Quite right, old top!" he said. "It was the only thing to do!"

"What the devil are you talking about?" demanded Bill, coldly. He had been suspicious all along of Archie's statement that he could listen better with his eyes shut.

"Eh? Oh, sorry! Thinking of something else."

"You were asleep."

"No, no, positively and distinctly not. Frightfully interested and rapt and all that, only I didn't quite get what you said."

"I said that Mabel was a corker."

"Oh, absolutely in every respect."

"There!" Bill turned to Lucille triumphantly. "You hear that? And Archie has only seen her photograph. Wait till he sees her in the flesh!"

"My dear old chap!" said Archie, shocked. "Ladies present! I mean to say, what!"

"I'm afraid," said Lucille, "that father will be the one you'll find it hard to convince."

"Yes," said her brother, gloomily.

"Your Mabel sounds perfectly charming, but—well, you know what father is! It *is* a pity she sings in the chorus!"

"She hasn't much of a voice," argued Bill, in extenuation.

"All the same——"

Archie, the conversation having reached a topic on which he considered himself one of the greatest living authorities—to wit, the unlovable disposition of his father-in-law—addressed the meeting as one who has a right to be heard.

"I wouldn't for the world say anything derogatory, as it were, to your jolly old pater, but there's no getting away from the fact that he's by way of being one of the leading man-eating fishes. I mean to say, he's a pretty tough nut. And what makes it worse than it might be is that, ever since Lucille brought me in and laid me on the mat, he's been looking to you to restore

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the good old family prestige, if you know what I mean. He thinks Lucille let the proud name of Brewster down a bit, don't you know."

"Don't be silly!" said Lucille. "You know quite well that you're a perfect little angel and that anyone would be lucky to get you for a son-in-law."

"Ah, but does *he?* Has that thought ever entered the parental bean? No! I fear me, no! Every time I get hold of a daisy, I give him another chance, but it always works out at 'He loves me not!' Very well then, laddie! It comes to this, that he's looking to you to marry someone pretty special, and I'm sorry to have to say it, old bird, but, if you come bounding in with part of the personnel of the *ensemble* on your arm and try to dig a father's blessing out of him, cold reason suggests that he's extremely apt to stab you in the gizzard with the pickle-fork."

"I wish," said Bill, annoyed, "you wouldn't talk as though Mabel were the ordinary kind of chorus-girl. She's only on the stage because her mother's hard-up and she wants to educate her little brother."

"I say," said Archie, concerned. "Take my tip, old top. In chatting the matter over with the pater, don't dwell too much on that aspect of the affair. I've been watching him closely, and it's about all he can stick, having to support *me*. If you ring in a mother and a little brother on him, he'll crack under the strain."

"Well, I've got to do something about it. Mabel will be over here in a week."

"Great Scot! You never told us that."

"Yes. She's going to be in the new Billington show. And, naturally, she will expect to meet my family. I've told her all about you."

"Did you explain father to her?" asked Lucille.

"Well, I just said she mustn't mind him, as his bark was worse than his bite."

"Well," said Archie, thoughtfully, "he hasn't bitten me yet, so you may be right. But you've got to admit that he's a bit of a barker."

Lucille considered.

"Really, Bill, I think your best plan would be to go straight to father and tell him the whole thing. You don't want him to hear about it in a roundabout way."

"The trouble is that, whenever I'm with father, I can't think of anything to say."

Archie found himself envying his father-in-law this merciful dispensation of Providence; for, where he himself was concerned, there had been no lack of eloquence on Bill's part. In the brief period in which he had known him, Bill had talked all the time and always on the one topic. As unpromising a subject as the tariff laws was easily diverted by him into a discussion of the absent Mabel; and finally Archie had given up trying to change the conversation.

"When I'm with father," said Bill, "I sort of lose my nerve, and yammer."

"Dashed awkward," said Archie, politely. He sat up suddenly. "I say! By Jove! I know what you want, old friend! Just thought of it!"

"That busy brain is never still," explained Lucille.

"Saw it in the paper this morning. An advertisement of a book, don't you know."

"I've no time for reading."

"You've time for reading this one, laddie, for you can't afford to miss it. It's a what-d'you-call-it book. What I mean to say is, if you read it and take its tips to heart, it guarantees to make you a convincing talker. The advertisement says so. The advertisement's all about a chappie whose name I forget, whom everybody loved because he talked so well. And, mark you, before he got hold of this book—'The Personality That Wins' was the name of it, if I remember rightly—he was known to all the lads in the office as Silent Samuel or something. Or it may have been Tongue-Tied Thomas. Well, one day he happened by good luck to blow in the necessary for the good old P. that W.'s, and now, whenever they want someone to go and talk Rockefeller or someone into lending them a million or so, they send for Samuel. Only now they call him Sammy the Spell-Binder and fawn upon him pretty copiously and all that. How about it, old son? How do we go?"

"What perfect nonsense," said Lucille.

"I don't know," said Bill, plainly impressed. "There might be something in it."

"Absolutely!" said Archie. "I remember it said, 'Talk convincingly, and no man will ever treat you with cold, unresponsive indifference.' Well, cold, unresponsive indifference is just what you don't want the pater to treat you with, isn't it, or is it, or isn't it, what? I mean, what?"

"It sounds all right," said Bill.

"It *is* all right," said Archie. "It's a scheme! I'll go farther. It's an egg!"

"The idea I had," said Bill, "was to see if I couldn't get Mabel a job in some straight comedy. That would take the curse off the thing a bit. Then I wouldn't have to dwell on the chorus end of the business, you see."

"Much more sensible," said Lucille.

"But what a deuce of a sweat," argued Archie. "I mean to say, having to pop round and nose about and all that."

"Aren't you willing to take a little trouble

for your stricken brother-in-law, worm ?" said Lucille, severely.

"Oh, absolutely! My idea was to get this book and coach the dear old chap. Rehearse him, don't you know. He could bone up the early chapters a bit and then drift round and try his convincing talk on me."

"It might be a good idea," said Bill, reflectively.

"Well, I'll tell you what *I'm* going to do," said Lucille. "I'm going to get Bill to introduce me to his Mabel, and, if she's as nice as he says she is, *I'll* go to father and talk convincingly to him."

"You're an ace!" said Bill.

"Absolutely!" agreed Archie, cordially. "*My* partner, what! All the same, we ought to keep the book as a second string, you know. I mean to say, you are a young and delicately nurtured girl—full of sensibility and shrinking what's-its-name and all that—and you know what the jolly old pater is. He might bark at you and put you right out of action in the first round. Well, then, don't you see, we could unleash old Bill, the trained silver-tongued expert, on him, and have him weak in no time. Personally, I'm all for the P. that W.'s."

Lucille looked at her watch.

"Good gracious! It's nearly one o'clock!"

"No!" Archie heaved himself up from his chair. "Well, it's a shame to break up this feast of reason and flow of soul and all that, but, if we don't leg it with some speed, we shall be late."

"We're lunching at the Nicholsons'," explained Lucille to her brother. "I wish you were coming too."

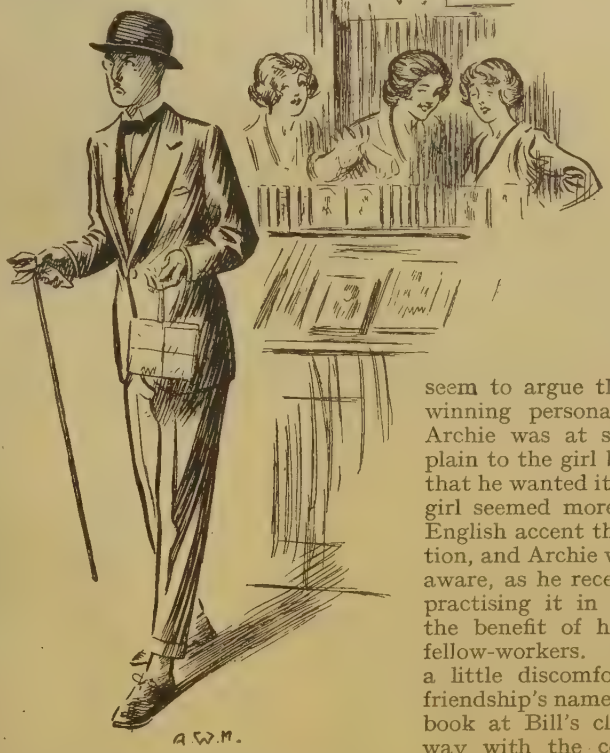
"Lunch!" Bill shook his head with a kind of tolerant scorn. "Lunch means nothing to me these days. I've other things to think of besides food." He looked as spiritual as his rugged features would permit. "I haven't written to Her yet to-day."

"But, dash it, old egg, if she's going to be over here in a week, what's the good of writing? The letter would cross her."

"I'm not mailing my letters to England," said Bill. "I'm keeping them for her to read when she arrives."

"My sainted aunt!" said Archie.

Devotion like this was something beyond his outlook.



"Archie was uncomfortably aware that she was practising his English accent for the benefit of her colleagues."

"THE Personality That Wins" cost Archie two dollars in cash and a lot of embarrassment when he asked for it at the store. To buy a treatise of that name would automatically seem to argue that you haven't a winning personality already, and Archie was at some pains to explain to the girl behind the counter that he wanted it for a friend. The girl seemed more interested in his English accent than in his explanation, and Archie was uncomfortably aware, as he receded, that she was practising it in an undertone for the benefit of her colleagues and fellow-workers. However, what is a little discomfort, if endured in friendship's name? Archie left the book at Bill's club, and went his way with the consciousness of a good deed done.

Some days later, Lucille, returning one morning to their mutual suite, found her husband seated in an upright chair at the table, an unusually stern expression on his amiable face. A large cigar was in the corner of his mouth. The fingers of one hand rested in the armhole of his waistcoat; with the other hand he tapped menacingly on the table.

Lucille was aware of Bill's presence. He had emerged sharply from the bedroom and walked briskly across the floor.

"Father!" said Bill.

"Well, my boy," said Archie, in a rasping voice, frowning heavily over the cigar. "What is it? Speak up, speak up! Why

the devil can't you speak up? This is my busy day!"

"What on earth are you doing?" asked Lucille.

Archie waved her away with the large gesture of a man of blood and iron interrupted while concentrating.

"Leave us, woman! We would be alone! Retire into the jolly old background and amuse yourself for a bit. Read a book! Do acrostics! Charge ahead, laddie!"

"Father!" said Bill, again.

'Yes, my boy, yes? What is it?"

"Father!"

Archie picked up the red-covered volume that lay on the table.

"Half a mo', old son. Sorry to stop you, but I knew there was something. I've just remembered. Your walk. All wrong!"

"All wrong?"

"All wrong! Where's the chapter on the Art of Walking? Here we are. Listen, deal old soul. Drink this in. 'In walking, one should strive to acquire that swinging easy movement from the hips. The correctly-poised walker seems to float along, as it were.' Now, old bean, you didn't float a dam' bit. You just galloped in like a chappie charging into a railway restaurant for a bowl of soup when his train leaves in two minutes. Dashed important, this walking business, you know. Get started wrong, and where are you? Try it again. . . . Much better." He turned to Lucille. "Notice him float along that time? Absolutely skimmed, what?"

Lucille had taken a seat, and was waiting for enlightenment.

"Are you and Bill going into vaudeville?" she asked.

Archie, scrutinizing his brother-in-law closely, had further criticism to make.

"'The man of self-respect and self-confidence,'" he read, "'stands erect in an easy, natural, graceful attitude. Heels not too far apart, head erect, eyes to the front with a level gaze'—get your gaze level, old thing!—'shoulders thrown back, arms hanging naturally at the sides when not otherwise employed'—that means that, if he swings on you, it's all right to guard—'chest expanded naturally, and abdomen'—this is no place for you, Lucille. Leg it out of earshot—'ab—what I said before—drawn in somewhat and above all not protruded.' Now, have you got all that? Yes, you look all right. Carry on, laddie, carry on. Let's have two-penn'orth of the Dynamic Voice and the Tone of Authority—some of the full, rich, round stuff we hear so much about!"

Bill fastened a gimlet eye upon his brother-in-law and drew a deep breath.

"Father!" he said. "Father!"

"You'll have to brighten up Bill's dialogue a lot," said Lucille, critically, "or you will never get bookings."

"Father!"

"I mean, it's all right as far as it goes, but it's sort of monotonous. Besides, one of you ought to be asking questions and the other answering. Bill ought to be saying, 'Who was that lady I saw you coming down the street with?' so that you would be able to say, 'That wasn't a lady. That was my wife.' I *know!* I've been to lots of vaudeville shows."

Bill relaxed his attitude. He deflated his chest, spread his heels, and ceased to draw in his abdomen.

"We'd better try this another time, when we're alone," he said, frigidly. "I can't do myself justice."

"Why do you want to do yourself justice?" asked Lucille.

"Right-o!" said Archie, affably, casting off his forbidding expression like a garment. "Rehearsal postponed. I was just putting old Bill through it," he explained, 'with a view to getting him into mid-season form for the jolly old pater."

"Oh!" Lucille's voice was the voice of one who sees light in darkness. "When Bill walked in like a cat on hot bricks and stood there looking stuffed, that was just the Personality That Wins!"

"That was it."

"Well, you couldn't blame me for not recognizing it, could you?"

Archie patted her head paternally.

"A little less of the caustic critic stuff," he said. "Bill will be all right on the night. If you hadn't come in then and put him off his stroke, he'd have shot out some amazing stuff, full of authority and dynamic accents and what not. I tell you, light of my soul, old Bill is all right! He's got the winning personality up a tree, ready whenever he wants to go and get it. Speaking as his backer and trainer, I think he'll twist your father round his little finger. Absolutely! It wouldn't surprise me if at the end of five minutes the good old dad started jumping through hoops and sitting up for lumps of sugar."

"It would surprise *me*."

"Ah, that's because you haven't seen old Bill in action. You crabbed his act before he had begun to spread himself."

"It isn't that at all. The reason why I think that Bill, however winning his personality may be, won't persuade father to let him marry a girl in the chorus is something that happened last night."

"Last night?"

"Well, at three o'clock this morning. It's on the front page of the early editions

of the evening papers. I brought one in for you to see, only you were so busy. Look! There it is!"

Archie seized the paper.

"Oh, Great Scot!"

"What is it?" asked Bill, irritably. "Don't stand goggling there! What the devil is it?"

"Listen to this, old thing!"

REVELRY BY NIGHT.
SPIRITED BATTLE ROYAL AT HOTEL COSMOPOLIS.
THE HOTEL DETECTIVE HAD A GOOD HEART BUT PAULINE PACKED THE PUNCH.

THE logical contender for Jack Dempsey's championship honours has been discovered: and, in an age where women are stealing men's jobs all the time, it will not come as a surprise to our readers to learn that she belongs to the sex that is more deadly than the male. Her name is Miss Pauline Preston, and her wallop is vouched for under oath—under many oaths—by Mr. Timothy O'Neill, known to his intimates as Pie-Face, who holds down the arduous job of detective at the Hotel Cosmopolis.

At three o'clock this morning, Mr. O'Neill was advised by the night-clerk that the occupants of every room within earshot of number 618 had 'phoned the desk to complain of a disturbance, a noise, a vocal uproar proceeding from the room mentioned. Thither, therefore, marched Mr. O'Neill, his face full of cheese-sandwich (for he had been indulging in an early breakfast or a late supper) and his heart of devotion to duty. He found there the Misses Pauline Preston and "Bobbie" St. Clair, of the personnel of the chorus of the Ftivolities, entertaining a few friends of either sex. A pleasant time was being had by all, and at the moment of Mr. O'Neill's entry the entire strength of the company was rendering with considerable emphasis that touching ballad, "There's a Place For Me In Heaven, For My Baby-Boy Is There."

The able and efficient officer at once suggested that there was a place for them in the street and the patrol-wagon would soon be waiting there: and, being a man of action as well as words, proceeded to gather up an armful of assorted guests as a preliminary to a personally-conducted tour into the cold night.

"'The man of self-respect and self-confidence,' he read, 'stands erect in an easy, natural, graceful attitude.'"

It was at this point that Miss Preston stepped into the limelight. Mr. O'Neill contends that she hit him with a brick, an iron casing, and the Singer Building. Be that as it may, her efforts were sufficiently able to induce him to retire for reinforcements, which, arriving, arrested the supper-party regardless of age or sex.

At the police-court this morning Miss Preston maintained that she and her friends were merely having a quiet home-evening and that Mr. O'Neill was no gentleman. The male guests gave their names respectively as Woodrow Wilson, Grover Cleveland, and William J. Bryan. These, however, are believed to be incorrect. But the moral is, if you want excitement rather than sleep, stay at the Hotel Cosmopolis.

Bill may have quaked inwardly as he listened to this epic, but outwardly he was unmoved.

"Well," he said, "what about it?"

"What about it!" said Lucille.

"What about it!" said Archie. "Why, my dear old friend, it simply means that all the time we've been putting in making your personality winning has been chucked away. Absolutely a dead loss! We might just as well have read a manual on how to knit sweaters."

"I don't see it," maintained Bill, stoutly. Lucille turned apologetically to her husband.

"You mustn't judge me by him, Archie, darling. This sort of thing doesn't run in the family. We are supposed to be rather bright on the whole. But poor Bill was dropped by his nurse when he was a baby, and fell on his head."

"I suppose what you're driving at," said the goaded Bill, "is that what has happened will make father pretty sore against girls who happen to be in the chorus?"

"That's absolutely it, old thing, I'm sorry to say. The next person who mentions the word chorus-girl in the jolly old governor's presence is going to take his life in his hands. I tell you, as one man to another, that I'd much rather be back in France hopping over the top than do it myself."

"What darned nonsense! Mabel may be in the chorus, but she isn't like those girls."

"Poor old Bill!" said Lucille. "I'm awfully sorry, but it's no use not facing facts. You know perfectly well that the reputation of the hotel is the thing father cares more about than anything else in the world, and that this is going to make him furious with all the chorus-girls in creation. It's no good trying to explain to him that your Mabel is in the chorus but not of the chorus, so to speak."

"Deuced well put!" said Archie, approvingly. "You're absolutely right. A chorus-girl by the river's brim, so to speak, a simple chorus-girl is to him, as it were, and she is nothing more, if you know what I mean."

"So now," said Lucille, "having shown you that the imbecile scheme which you concocted with my poor well-meaning husband is no good at all, I will bring you words of cheer. Your own original plan—of getting your Mabel a part in a comedy—was always the best one. And you can do it. I wouldn't have broken the bad news so abruptly if I hadn't had some consolation to give you afterwards. I met Reggie van Tuyl just now, wandering about as if the cares of the world were on his shoulders, and he told me that he was putting up most of the money for a new play that's going into rehearsal right away. Reggie's an old friend of yours. All you have to do is to go to him and ask him to use his influence to get your Mabel a small part. There's sure to be a maid or something with only a line or two that won't matter."

"A ripe scheme!" said Archie. "Very sound and fruity!"

The cloud did not lift from Bill's corrugated brow.

"That's all very well," he said. "But you know what a talker Reggie is. He's an obliging sort of chump, but his tongue's fastened on at the middle and waggles at both ends. I don't want the whole of New York to know about my engagement, and have somebody spilling the news to father, before I'm ready."

"That's all right," said Lucille. "Archie can speak to him. There's no need for him to mention your name at all. He can just say there's a girl he wants to get a part for. You would do it, wouldn't you, angel-face?"

"Like a bird, queen of my soul."

"Then that's splendid. You'd better give Archie that photograph of Mabel to give to Reggie, Bill."

"Photograph?" said Bill. "Which photograph? I have twenty-four!"

ARCHIE found Reggie van Tuyl brooding in a window of his club that looked over Fifth Avenue. Reggie was one of the first friends Archie had made on his arrival in America. He was a rather melancholy young man who suffered from elephantiasis of the bank-roll and the other evils that arise from that complaint. Gentle and sentimental by nature, his sensibilities had been much wounded by contact with a sordid world; and the thing that had first endeared Archie to him was the fact that the latter, though chronically hard-up, had never made any attempt to borrow money from him. Reggie would have parted with it on demand, but it had delighted him to find that Archie seemed to take a pleasure in his society without having any ulterior motives. He was fond of Archie, and also of Lucille; and their happy marriage was a constant source of gratification to him.

For Reggie was a sentimentalist. He would have liked to live in a world of ideally united couples, himself ideally united to some charming and affectionate girl. But, as a matter of cold fact, he was a bachelor, and most of the couples he knew veterans of several divorces. In Reggie's circle, therefore, the home-life of Archie and Lucille shone like a good deed in a naughty world. It inspired him. In moments of depression it restored his waning faith in human nature.

Consequently, when Archie, having greeted him and slipped into a chair at his side,

suddenly produced from his inside pocket the photograph of an extremely pretty girl and asked him to get her a small part in the play which he was financing, he was shocked and disappointed. He was in a more than usually sentimental mood that afternoon, and had, indeed, at the moment of Archie's arrival, been dreaming wistfully of soft arms clasped snugly about his collar and the patter of little feet and all that sort of thing. He gazed reproachfully at Archie.

"Archie!" His voice quivered with emotion. "Is it worth it? Is it worth it, old man? Think of the poor little woman at home!"

Archie was puzzled.

"Eh, old top? Which poor little woman?"

"Think of her trust in you, her faith——"

"I don't absolutely get you, old bean."

"What would Lucille say if she knew about this?"

"Oh, she does. She knows all about it."

"Good heavens!" cried Reggie. He was shocked to the core of his being. One of the articles of his faith was that the union of Lucille and Archie was different from those loose partnerships which were the custom in his world. He had not been conscious of such a poignant feeling that the foundations of the universe were cracked and tottering and that there was no light and sweetness in life since the morning, eighteen months back, when a negligent valet had sent him out into Fifth Avenue with only one spat on.

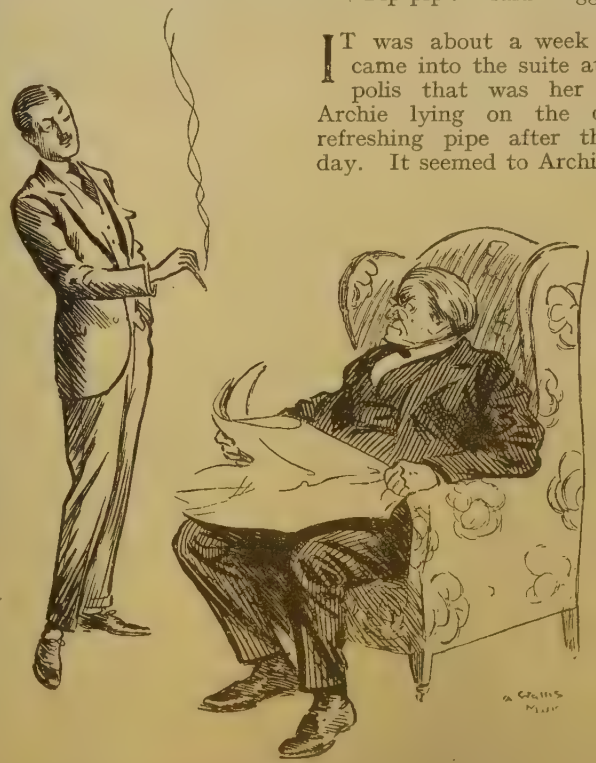
"It was Lucille's idea," explained Archie. He was about to mention his brother-in-law's connection with the matter, but checked himself in time, remembering Bill's specific objection to having his secret revealed to Reggie. "It's like this, old thing, I've never met this female, but she's a pal of Lucille's" — he comforted his conscience by the reflection that, if she wasn't now, she would be in a few days— "and Lucille wants to do her a bit of good. She's been on the stage in England, you know, supporting a jolly old widowed mother and educating a little brother and all that kind and species of rot, you understand, and now she's coming over to America, and Lucille wants you to rally round and shove her into your show and generally keep the home fires burning and so forth. How do we go?"

Reggie beamed with relief. He felt just as he had felt on that other occasion at the moment when a taxi-cab had rolled up and enabled him to hide his spatless leg from the public gaze.

"Oh, I see!" he said. "Why, delighted, old man, quite delighted!"

"Any small part would do. Isn't there a maid or something in your bob's-worth of refined entertainment who drifts about saying, 'Yes, madam,' and all that sort of thing? Well, then, that's just the thing. Topping! I knew I could rely on you, old bird. I'll get Lucille to ship her round to your address when she arrives. I fancy she's due to totter in somewhere in the next few days. Well, I must be popping. Toodle-oo!"

"Pip-pip!" said Reggie.



"Mr. Brewster called him a fool and told him to go away."

IT was about a week later that Lucille came into the suite at the Hotel Cosmopolis that was her home, and found Archie lying on the couch, smoking a refreshing pipe after the labours of the day. It seemed to Archie that his wife was not in her usual cheerful frame of mind. He kissed her, and, having relieved her of her parasol, endeavoured without success to balance it on his chin. Having picked it up from the floor and placed it on the table, he became aware that Lucille was looking at him in a despondent sort of way. Her grey eyes were clouded.

"Halloa, old thing," said Archie. "What's up?"

Lucille sighed wearily.

"Archie, darling, do you know any really good swear-words?"

"Well," said Archie, reflectively, "let me see. I did pick up a few tolerably ripe and breezy expressions out in France. All through my military career there was something about me—some subtle magnetism, don't you know, and that sort of thing—that seemed to make colonels and blighters of that order rather inventive. I sort of inspired them, don't you know. I remember one brass-hat addressing me for quite ten minutes, saying something new all the time. And even then he seemed to think he had only touched the fringe of the subject. As a matter of fact, he said straight out in the most frank and confiding way that mere words couldn't do justice to me. But why?"

"Because I want to relieve my feelings."

"Anything wrong?"

"Everything's wrong. I've just been having tea with Bill and his Mabel."

"Oh, ah!" said Archie, interested. "And what's the verdict?"

"Guilty!" said Lucille. "And the sentence, if I had anything to do with it, would be transportation for life." She peeled off her gloves irritably. "What fools men are! Not you, precious! You're the only man in the world that isn't, it seems to me. You did marry a nice girl, didn't you? *You* didn't go running round after females with crimson hair, goggling at them with your eyes popping out of your head like a bulldog waiting for a bone."

"Oh, I say! Does old Bill look like that?"

"Worse!"

Archie rose to a point of order.

"But one moment, old lady. You speak of crimson hair. Surely old Bill—in the extremely jolly monologues he used to deliver whenever I didn't see him coming and he got me alone—used to allude to her hair as brown."

"It isn't brown now. It's bright scarlet. Good gracious, I ought to know. I've been looking at it all the afternoon. It dazzled me. If I've got to meet her again, I mean to go to the oculist's and get a pair of those smoked glasses you wear at Palm Beach." Lucille brooded silently for a while over the tragedy. "I don't want to say anything against her, of course."

"No, no, of course not."

"But of all the awful, second-rate girls I ever met, she's the worst! She has vermilion hair and an imitation Oxford manner. She's so horribly refined that it's dreadful to listen to her. She's a sly, creepy, slinky, made-up, insincere vampire! She's common! She's awful! She's a cat!"

"You're quite right not to say anything against her," said Archie, approvingly. "It begins to look," he went on, "as if the good old pater was about due for another shock. He has a hard life!"

"If Bill *dares* to introduce that girl to father, he's taking his life in his hands."

"But surely that was the idea—the scheme—the wheeze, wasn't it? Or do you think there's any chance of his weakening?"

"Weakening! You should have seen him looking at her! It was like a small boy flattening his nose against the window of a candy-store."

"Bit thick!"

Lucille kicked the leg of the table.

"And to think," she said, "that, when I was a little girl, I used to look up to Bill as a monument of wisdom. I used to hug his knees and gaze into his face and wonder how anyone could be so magnificent." She gave the unoffending table another kick. "If I could have looked into the future," she said, with feeling, "I'd have bitten him in the ankle!"

IN the days which followed, Archie found himself a little out of touch with Bill and his romance. Lucille referred to the matter only when he brought the subject up, and made it plain that the topic of her future sister-in-law was not one which she enjoyed discussing. Mr. Brewster, senior, when Archie, by way of delicately preparing his mind for what was about to befall, asked him if he liked red hair, called him a fool, and told him to go away and bother someone else when they were busy. The only person who could have kept him thoroughly abreast of the trend of affairs was Bill himself; and experience had made Archie wary in the matter of meeting Bill. The position of confidant to a young man in the early stages of love is no sinecure, and it made Archie sleepy even to think of having to talk to his brother-in-law. He sedulously avoided his lovelorn relative, and it was with a sinking feeling one day that, looking over his shoulder as he sat in the Cosmopolis grill-room preparatory to ordering lunch, he perceived Bill bearing down upon him, obviously resolved upon joining his meal.

To his surprise, however, Bill did not instantly embark upon his usual monologue. Indeed, he hardly spoke at all. He champed a chop, and seemed to Archie to avoid his eye. It was not till lunch was over and they were smoking that he unburdened himself.

"Archie!" he said.

"Halloa, old thing!" said Archie. "Still there? I thought you'd died or something.

" Bill Brewster was leaning forward with bulging eyes. 'Are you engaged to Mabel Winchester?' "

Talk about our old pals, Tongue-tied Thomas and Silent Sammy! You could beat 'em both on the same evening."

" It's enough to make me silent."

" What is?"

Bill had relapsed into a sort of waking

dream. He sat frowning sombrely, lost to the world. Archie, having waited what seemed to him a sufficient length of time for an answer to his question, bent forward and touched his brother-in-law's hand gently with the lighted end of his cigar. Bill came to himself with a howl.

"What is?" said Archie.

"What is what?" said Bill.

"Now listen, old thing," protested Archie. "Life is short and time is flying. Suppose we cut out the cross-talk. You hinted there was something on your mind—something worrying the old bean—and I'm waiting to hear what it is."

Bill fiddled a moment with his coffee-spoon.

"I'm in an awful hole," he said at last.

"What's the trouble?"

"It's about that darned girl!"

Archie blinked.

"What!"

"That darned girl!"

Archie could scarcely credit his senses. He had been prepared—indeed, he had steeled himself—to hear Bill allude to his affinity in a number of ways. But "that darned girl" was not one of them.

"Companion of my riper years," he said, "let's get this thing straight. When you say 'that darned girl,' do you by any possibility allude to——?"

"Of course I do!"

"But, William, old bird——"

"Oh, I know, I know, I know!" said Bill, irritably. "You're surprised to hear me talk like that about her?"

"A trifle, yes. Possibly a trifle. When last heard from, laddie, you must recollect, you were speaking of the lady as your soul-mate, and at least once—if I remember rightly—you alluded to her as your little dusky-haired lamb."

A sharp howl escaped Bill.

"Don't!" A strong shudder convulsed his frame. "Don't remind me of it!"

"There's been a species of slump, then—yes?—no?—in dusky-haired lambs?"

"How," demanded Bill, savagely, "can a girl be a dusky-haired lamb when her hair's bright scarlet?"

"Dashed difficult!" admitted Archie. "I suppose Lucille told you about that?"

"She did touch on it. Lightly, as it were. With a sort of gossamer touch, so to speak."

Bill threw off the last fragments of reserve.

"Archie, I'm in the devil of a fix. I don't know why it was, but directly I saw her—things seemed so different over in England—I mean." He swallowed ice-water in gulps. "I suppose it was seeing her with Lucille. Old Lu is such a thoroughbred. Seemed to kind of show her up. Like seeing imitation pearls by the side of real pearls. And that crimson hair! It sort of put the lid on it." Bill brooded morosely. "It ought to be a criminal offence for women to dye their hair. Especially red. What the devil do women do that sort of thing for?"

"Don't blame me, old thing. It's not my fault."

Bill looked furtive and harassed.

"It makes me feel such a cad! Here am I, feeling that I would give all I've got in the world to get out of the darned thing, and all the time the poor girl seems to be getting fonder of me than ever."

"How do you know?" Archie surveyed his brother-in-law critically. "Perhaps her feelings have changed too. Very possibly she may not like the colour of *your* hair. I don't myself. Now, if you were to dye yourself crimson——"

"Oh, shut up! Of course a man knows when a girl's fond of him."

"By no means, laddie. When you're my age——"

"I *am* your age."

"So you are! I forgot that. Well, now, approaching the matter from another angle, let us suppose, old son, that Miss What's-Her-Name—the party of the second part——"

"Stop it!" said Bill, suddenly. "Here comes Reggie!"

"Eh?"

"Here comes Reggie van Tuyl. I don't want him to hear us talking about the darned thing."

Archie looked over his shoulder and perceived that it was indeed so. Reggie was threading his way among the tables.

"Well, *he* looks pleased with things, anyway," said Bill, enviously. "Glad somebody's happy."

He was right. Reggie van Tuyl's usual mode of progress through a restaurant was a somnolent slouch. Now he was positively bounding along. Furthermore, the usual expression on Reggie's face was a sleepy sadness. Now he smiled brightly and with animation. He curveted towards their table, beaming and erect, his head up, his gaze level, and his chest expanded, for all the world as if he had been reading the hints in "The Personality That Wins."

Archie was puzzled. Something had plainly happened to Reggie. But what? It was idle to suppose that somebody had left him money, for he had been left practically all the money there was a matter of ten years before.

"Halloa, old bean," he said, as the newcomer, radiating good will and *bonhomie*, arrived at the table and hung over it like

a noon-day sun. "We've finished. But rally round and we'll watch you eat. Dashed interesting, watching old Reggie eat. Why go to the Zoo?"

Reggie shook his head.

"Sorry, old man. Can't. Just on my way to the Ritz. Stepped in because I thought you might be here. I wanted you to be the first to hear the news."

"News?"

"I'm the happiest man alive!"

"You look it, darn you!" growled Bill, on whose mood of grey gloom this human sunbeam was jarring heavily.

"I'm engaged to be married!"

"Congratulations, old egg!" Archie shook his hand cordially. "Dash it, don't you know, as an old married man I like to see you young fellows settling down."

"I don't know how to thank you enough, Archie, old man," said Reggie, fervently.

"Thank me?"

"It was through you that I met her. Don't you remember the girl you sent to me? You wanted me to get her a small part——"

He stopped, puzzled. Archie had uttered a sound that was half gasp and half gurgle, but it was swallowed up in the extraordinary noise from the other side of the table. Bill Brewster was leaning forward with bulging eyes and soaring eyebrows.

"Are you engaged to Mabel Winchester?"

"Why, by George!" said Reggie. "Do you know her?"

Archie recovered himself.

"Slightly," he said. "Slightly. Old Bill knows her slightly, as it were. Not very well, don't you know, but—how shall I put it?"

"Slightly," said Bill.

"Just the word. Slightly."

"Splendid!" said Reggie van Tuyl. "Why don't you come along to the Ritz and meet her now?"

Bill stammered. Archie came to the rescue again.

"Bill can't come now. He's got a date."

"A date?" said Bill.

"A date," said Archie. "An appointment, don't you know. A—a—in fact, a date."

"But—er—wish her happiness from me," said Bill, cordially.

"Thanks very much, old man," said Reggie.

"And say I'm delighted, will you?"

"Certainly."

"You won't forget the word, will you? Delighted."

"Delighted."

"That's right. Delighted."

Reggie looked at his watch.

"Halloa! I must rush!"

Bill and Archie watched him as he bounded out of the restaurant.

"Poor old Reggie!" said Bill, with a fleeting compunction.

'Not necessarily," said Archie. "What I mean to say is, tastes differ, don't you know. One man's peach is another man's poison, and *vice versâ*."

"There's something in that."

"Absolutely! Well," said Archie, judicially, "this would appear to be, as it were, the maddest, merriest day in all the glad New Year, yes, no?"

Bill drew a deep breath.

"You bet your sorrowful existence it is!" he said. "I'd like to do something to celebrate it."

"The right spirit!" said Archie. "Absolutely the right spirit! Begin by paying for my lunch!"

Next month: "Washy Makes His Presence Felt."

A WOODEN DEER.

A STATELY pine, with a little skill, can easily be made to look quite grotesque. If you doubt it, observe the pine here. Yes, it is a pine, though it looks more like a starving, weak-kneed deer. The body, legs, and tail are one slice of the pine tree, and the head and horns another.

The owner simply put the head and body together, nailed two axle-grease boxes to the head for eyes, and stood the creature on its legs. It is a strange-looking beast, but its master is quite proud of it, since he discovered it.

JACK-GO-TO-BED-AT-NOON

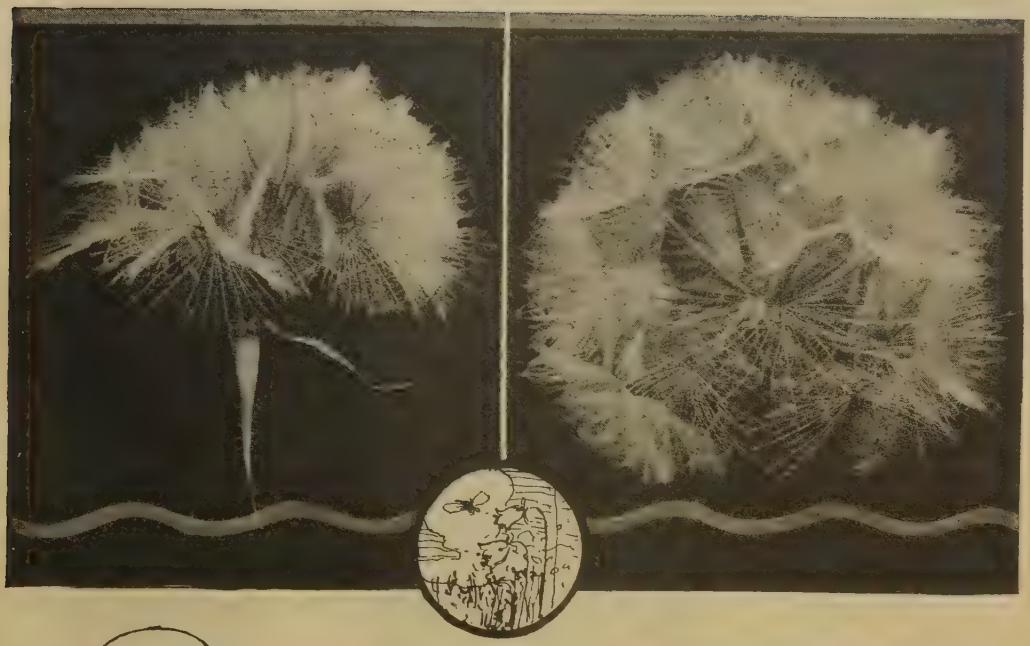
AND HIS PARACHUTES

GROWING down amongst the pastures there is a kind of glorified dandelion; indeed, but for its tall stem and long, grass-like leaves the unobservant passer-by might regard its flowers as those of that plant. The country children will tell you, however, that it is "Jack-go-to-bed-at-noon"—a name acquired from its habit of closing up its flower-heads about midday.

This habit of "going to sleep," as it is popularly called, so early in the day is a most interesting action on the part of the plant and throws some considerable light on its past history. It is rarely, if ever, that man does anything or invents any mechanism which has not been anticipated in some form in the natural world. When in the early stages of the war the Government brought about the early closing of public-houses as a means of preventing drinking abuses, even that action had been forestalled ages before in natural warfare. The "sleeping" Jack-go-to-bed-at-noon is simply a closed drink establishment—closed against its insect patrons.

The majority of plants open their flowers and expose their brilliant petals to the brightest sunlight, at the same time wafting out sweet odours to attract distant insects that may not be close enough to see their colour display. It is then, too, that the sweet nectar in such flowers flows in abundance to quench the thirst of the numerous insect callers attracted by the alluring scents and gaudy signboards. Why, then, does Jack-go-to-bed-at-noon put up the shutters just before the busiest hours of the day?

Now, before considering that question, let us inquire what time Jack-go-to-bed-at-noon commences business. You will have to rise very early if you wish to see "Jack" open his shutters, for, in fine weather, it is generally between three and four a.m. The dandelion, a kind of cousin of Jack-go-to-bed-at-noon, behaves somewhat differently, and does not open its flower-heads until about seven a.m., closing them again about three or four p.m. During wet and cold weather both plants will often keep their flowers closed the whole of the day. There is little doubt that these differences of behaviour have intimate relation with their special insect visitors.



by JOHN J. WARD

Illustrated with Photographs by the Author. F.E.S.

In the first place, we have to recognize that flowers are visited by many unbidden insect guests, and that at the brightest hours of sunlight the chances of such visits become increasingly numerous. Flower-heads of the dandelion type are particularly attractive to various kinds of insects on account of their rich flow of nectar. Müller, who made special observations regarding the dandelion, recorded that ninety-three distinct species of insects visited the blooms of that plant; and, although no actual records are available for Jack-go-to-bed-at-noon, it is probable that the insect species visiting it would be equally numerous, if not more so, as it bears bolder and more attractive flower-heads. Amongst these insect species, too, some would naturally be of more value than others in effecting the pollination of the crowded florets in the flower-heads while sipping the nectar provided for them in return for their services, while others would be mere honey thieves, stealing the overflowing honey without properly entering the tubes of the florets, and, consequently, leaving them much as they found them—less some of their nectar.

There, I think, is the whole explanation of why "Jack" goes to bed at noon—and often before that time. The insects which pollinate its flower-heads best are bees and their near relations, and these insects rise with the first rays of sunlight. Later in the morning, when the heavy dew is off the herbage, come ants and creeping insects, most of which are honey thieves, reaching the flower-heads by way of their stems, instead of alighting from the air amidst the piled-up heaps of yellow pollen-dust at the mouths of the florets, and carrying it away on their dusted bodies to fertilize other flower-heads. The ants, on the other hand, carefully avoid the sticky pollen-dust, and select open spaces where they can delicately sip the overflowing cups without getting their limbs or bodies soiled.

So it came about that those Jack-go-to-bed-at-noon plants which acquired the habit of opening their flower-heads earliest in the morning, and closed them earliest in the forenoon, got their florets more quickly and more effectually fertilized, and consequently produced more abundant seed; so the habit became inherent. The dandelion appears to be following in the same direction, but has

probably not yet attained the same perfection. Viewing the matter in this aspect it is obvious that the early closing of such flower-heads is simply to prevent abuses of the drinking privilege—a measure found necessary even in the warfare of plant life.

Such tactics point to a very advanced type of plant life; indeed, Jack-go-to-bed-at-noon is a veritable aristocrat in the plant world, belonging to the great Composite family, which stands at the head of plant life just as man and other mammalia do at the head of the animal kingdom. The fact of it bearing flower-heads instead of separate flowers is another proof of its advanced evolution; these tiny flowers all crowded together into one head is but another device to save the time of the busy bee, which then only has to withdraw its proboscis from one floret and insert it in the next, wasting no time in searching for the flowers, as in the case of scattered blooms.

All these manœuvres have but one object in view—the welfare of the offspring. To produce the sweet nectar in each of the florets means the utilization of considerable energy on the part of the plant, and it cannot afford to waste that energy in providing food for unworthy insects which render it no service. At the base of each floret is a seed destined in favourable circumstances to pioneer new land for its species at some distant spot, and if that nectar is taken by the invited insect guest the fertilization of that seed will be secured.

"Ages before man ever used a parachute 'Jack-go-to-bed-at-noon' had completely perfected the idea."

Then the attractive colours, having served their purpose, rapidly disappear, together with the sweet nectar, for now the plant no longer desires to attract insect visitors; its tactics henceforth are to woo the wings of the wind.

As each fruit matures, at its summit appears a kind of narrow beak, which elongates and then expands at its apex into a series of radiating ribs which open out like umbrella-wires, each being feathered along its length, and eventually forming the most perfect little parachute it is possible to conceive. Ages before man ever used a parachute Jack-go-to-bed-at-noon had completely perfected the idea, and from its tall stems was, on suitable windy days, speeding farewell to each of its offspring as each little fruit sailed away a complete aeronaut to seek new fields for its species.

How marvellously the flower-heads change into a seed-ball so soon as the fruits have ripened, the four photographs on the preceding pages, showing a week's development, will explain better than a volume of words.

The large seed-ball, or "clock" of the village children, is not easily broken, like that of its compeer the dandelion; it requires quite a strong wind to break it up, and then away on that same strong breeze several of the ripest fruits will sail off into space. One is quickly carried over the meadow land down into the valley, to discover itself suddenly precipitated into a deep railway cutting in the wake of a passing train. Away along the cutting it goes, urged onward by the wind and the air movement caused by the rush of the train, and three-quarters of a mile farther on, after many collisions with the bank, it becomes firmly anchored amongst some tall grasses, where, if no wind or the draught from another passing train removes it, it will gently slide down amongst the grass blades, assisted by the elasticity of the parachute above it, until its pointed base reaches and penetrates the soil. The following summer at that spot, if all has gone well, a tall Jack-go-to-bed-at-noon will hold up its golden flower-heads to the passing bees, and close its doors against them as noonday draws near.

In the same way another of the offspring becomes a pioneer in new pastures, descending in the midst of the newly-ploughed field, staking its claim, and starting life under the most favourable conditions. Throughout the whole of its history Jack-go-to-bed-at-noon presents wonderful examples of highly-evolved tactics, all of which point to its aristocratic birth.

The following story, which was sent in for our Short Story Competition, was one of those from which the judges would have made their final selection. Unfortunately, however, it was found to exceed the maximum length of six thousand words, and therefore had to be disqualified.

HAUNTED HOUSES

by JAN GORDON

ILLUSTRATED BY CHAS. CROMBIE

THE white road which curved over the first breast of the Downs did not lead to that house. Nor did the sun-faded paths nor the sheep tracks show the way, for there was no longer any road to that house, nor path nor track. It crouched, sullen, shunned, alone. A gate of rusty iron trellis linked the circle of the wall, which, binding about both house and grounds, fenced them off from the generous bosom of the broad land: a crumbling wall of rotting brick and lime, seamed with many a crevice in which the rats' eyes glinted like stars in hell's dark heaven, and whence the squeak of the field-mouse echoed faintly the plaint of that corroded gate. Within the wall dark evergreen trees stood in closed ranks, hanging their listless arms, like mourners round an open grave; dark foreign pines, a blot upon the broad still sea of interminable grass.

The setting sun could lend no warmth to those chill trees. It trailed ribbons of gay glory across the Downs—orange, yellow, and emerald, it filled the hollows with a dull lilac mist; the blackberry bushes were beaten in pure copper; even the face of the distant tramp became a grotesque, chiselled of gold, and the tragedy of his coverings a fine cloak of velvet sunbeams. The rich light fell upon those trees and was swallowed up. Only one ray, down the straight and finite avenue, stained the front of the house and struck the fading lichens, which clung beneath the eaves, red as the seethes of blood from the lid of some damned witches' brew.

There was a child at the rust-eaten gate, hand upon the latch. She was not large, despite her thirteen years; lack of warm clothes and of nourishment had retarded her growth, had wrought her features to an elfin sharpness. Her body was lean as any wild creature's, and clad in thin cotton ripped by the briers. Her eyes were large, brilliant with weeping, and on the pale streaked mask of her face her mouth was painted purple as an Eastern houri's with the blackberries which she had plucked to stay her hunger. A forgotten daisy-crown was on her head, a coronet awry and faded; the tangled tails of her hair, with which she had mopped the tears, hung damp against her shoulders.

A town child she was. No country girl would have dared to touch that muttering latch, nor country boy to filch one egg from the matted nests in the pines or from the swallows' earthenware beneath the eaves. A slum child, whose wits had been ground to a fine edge on the paving-stones—a slum child sent charitably upon a country holiday, to taste a health which she might not long enjoy, to see a life which she would not live, to find memories which she would never understand. That morning—a crust stolen from her village hostess's kitchen in her pocket—she had run from her town companions. Tired of exchanging taunt or blow with the village louts, unconsciously tired of so much warfare, when all her life had been warfare, she had sought a peace, taking her relish from the bramble bushes and chasing the butterfly for her sport. For some hours she had been lost.

She stood, her hand upon the latch of the

gate, wondering, not at the damp decay, but what manner of people lived there. Her shadow, flung through the thin trellis, lay as a dark arrowhead on the viridian mosses of the sodden path. She clicked the iron and, entering, moved cautiously towards the house. The shadows of dusk entered with her, and ran upwards over the walls of that house, cooling the burning lichens to a duller red, veiling the rubies and amethysts of the broken window-panes. It was more cold in the vault of the trees than it had been on the Downs, and the damp struck through the child's poor underclothing. She shivered.

Her untamed eyes noted the broken windows, the shattered roof, and saw how on the northern corner the wall had collapsed, exposing through the serrated structure of the brickwork stained shreds of a once merry wallpaper. A bat, chasing the evening flies, cut wild curvets against the greying sky. Once it flickered across her face and she shot out her arms, scared.

"Keep orf!" she cried, and then as she watched it, now here, now there, in its fantastic gambols almost an hallucination: "Crikey, it's a bird gorn barmy!"

Frightened more by the suggestion which this idea called up than by the thing itself, she hurried up the drive to the house, and, standing on the step, beat upon the door, which swung at her touch. She peered within. The door opened into a large kitchen, populated only by shadows. What light there was from the door and the large window fell upon the floor, showing the rat-holes and crevices in the worm-eaten boards, and more faintly on the great frame of the fireplace, which seemed a dark gateway—the portal of some profound mystery. All else was varying shadow—dim, indistinguishable. As the child hesitated, a rat squeaked sharply and ran across the boards. She jerked back. She was not afraid of rats, with them she had companioned in many a city cellarage, but her nerves were now tight spanned. Loneliness in the crowd she had experienced, but the loneliness of solitude was strange, and the bat's madness had shocked her. Recovering, she recognized friend rat by his noise, and, feeling somewhat less alone, she entered the deserted house and walked carefully to the window.

The room smelt of rot, of decay, and of death, but she did not notice this, her nostrils were inured to the yet more fœtid odours of life. Here was at least shelter, here at least the loneliness was enclosed, the darkness a solid darkness which she knew, and not that dim expanse of a gloom which had no limits—height, length, breadth of infinity, negative, overpowering, which she could now see into through the window, a spacelessness and purity which seemed to hold an indistinct threat. Even the smells were comforting. But she was cold.

THE afternoon weariness had wrung from her all her tears, or she would have sobbed, but her throat was closed and painful. As her eyes became more accustomed to the darkness, she began to see objects in the lost corners, here a pile of stakes, there an old sieve, a broken wheelbarrow, and the lower part of a rickety stair which disappeared in the mottled shadows of the roof. A dark heap in the corner sent her creeping across the floor in exploration, and she found some mouldering sacks of which she began to make a bed. But before it was complete, the sound of the gate and of footsteps drove her first to the window, and thence again to the far corner, where she crouched, pulling the sacks about her to hide the dim clearness of her dress. A man was coming up the drive; she knew men, a curse at one end and a boot at the other, and, between, a stomach to hold beer for the purpose of intoxication. The door was kicked more widely open and, framed in the square set with the dusk behind him, was the Tramp, a black, hard-edged figure, cut out as if with the nimble shears of some old silhouettist. He hesitated, peering, but the light was now insufficient, he could see nothing, so he sniffed instead like a dog.

"Stinks empty enough," he muttered; "wonder if the floor'll blinkin' well hold."

And he put out a cautious foot.

At sunset, the Tramp, a glorious figure sitting on the far lip of the Down, had seen the house and had sucked his yellowed teeth. As the sunset died, his glory had fallen from him, the velvet changed to rags unspeakable. The gilding faded from his face, revealing the shoddy foundation; the Hesperidean apple of his throat shrivelled to a weather-dried pippin; the flame in his eyes sank and went out behind thin slits in which simplicity and wisdom fought a never-ending battle. He sucked his degraded teeth, his narrowed eyes looking at the house, which lay in the huge cup, half-way to where upon the horizon the last embers of the sunset were cooled to grey ash.

"It's there or nowhere," said he. "There or nowhere; they'll pinch me if I goes back to that bloomin' village. Cuss them farmers."

He rose and began to walk down the gentle slope, swearing amiably whenever his feet slipped upon the baked and polished grass, for he was tired. He had run some distance that day. When his feet slid he flung out an arm to balance himself and flourished in the air the corpse of a healthy cockerel which he was carrying, the fruit of his sprint and also the reason thereof.

He, too, had stood at the gate and fumbled with the latch, but he knew of the house.

"Haunted, is it?" he muttered, staring up the sullen drive. "Well, it bloomin' well looks haunted."

But, then, the trees were one dark mass, the lichens in the blue of the dusk were an evil, purplish hue, and the aged mottled plaster of the walls quivered with a thin phosphorescence akin to that of the evening primrose. From very far away an owl gave out intermittently its weird and solemn warning.

"Things ain't always what they seem, anyhow," said the Tramp, and pulled open the iron gate.

As he set his foot on the boarded floor he stamped, and finding it firm enough took immediate possession, loosing from his shoulders the tawdry package of his worldly goods on to which he dropped the cockerel. To the child, crouching in her corner, embedded in mouldering sacks, he was now but sounds, ominous, disembodied.

A sudden streak of flame, and he had lit a match, and from the match a short end of candle, and immediately the shadows were back again, making furtive signals in the corners, playing hide-and-seek in and out of the piled stakes, and behind the wheelbarrow, as the Tramp moved here and there, a dim Diogenes. The child cowered deeper in her sackcloth, buried up to the nose, only her sharp eyes watching with a fearful enmity, with the expression of some half-cornered animal. The Tramp, slightly myopic, did not perceive her. He set the candle on the high ledge of the chimney, and began to burst in pieces some of the mouldering stakes, and with them build a fire on the hearthstone. When it was well alight he economically extinguished his petty candle, and the shadows were all set a-dancing on the walls and between the low rafters. With quick precision he dressed another stick, for a spit, ripped from the fowl entrails, which he flung through the open door into the night, and soon the bird was roasting over the clear wood fire. Its odour, mingled with the smell of the burnt feathers, filled the kitchen. The child sniffed eagerly, with sensations similar to those she had often experienced when, empty-bellied, she had hung over the grating of some East-end cookhouse.

"Ghosts," said the Tramp to himself; "so them yokels say. All stomick and no 'ead, that's wot they is."

He spat reflectively into the flames.

"Wish I 'ad some 'baccy—I'd make ghosts all right."

When the chicken was cooked, he wrenched it greedily apart, devouring all its detachments with gusto. Successively, legs and wings were gnawed to the bone. The child, eager-eyed, watched him. The carcass he turned over in his hands, as if reluctant to spare, and then rising, set it on the ledge of the mantelshelf.

"Breakfass," he said; "you'll do better for breakfass, ole bird," and set himself to breaking more sticks. Then, dragging the bundle from where he had flung it by the door, he arranged it as a pillow, and lay down on the warmed hearthstone. In ten minutes he was asleep. His slumber filled the kitchen with triumphant solo, a riotous slumber scorning the insistent quiet of that house, as his life scorned the decencies of ordered civilization.

But the child was not asleep. She crouched, daisy-crowned, in her sacks, like some bedraggled wood-sprite, half escaping from the earth but very awake. Sleep may be the poor man's meal, but it becomes a sorry and an impossible substitute when rich roasted odours fill the nostrils. Dimly she could see the vague shape of the cockerel's carcass in the upper gloom of the chimney-piece. It made her a voiceless cry far louder than the bodied sounds of the Tramp's slumber. She hovered, wrenched by desire and by fear. The Tramp slept on.

THE rats were at the body of the chicken, edging it this way and that, and presently it thumped to the floor, but the man did not awaken. Now that the chicken lay full in the firelight it was at once more tempting and more approachable. The child cautiously pushed back the sacks and crept out, her senses intent upon the Tramp's self-advertised slumber, her desires fixed upon the food. She had seized the prize, had risen to her feet for flight, when something, perhaps that subtle aura which we all carry, and which, though imperceptible to the duller waking, has yet power to sound response from the strung senses of sleep—as the insensible wind will thrum an æolian harp—disturbed the man. The snoring stopped suddenly. The Tramp sat up, his eyes targets of amazement, his lower lip dropping. The child, paralyzed with fear, stood motionless; in the streets she would have fled, but here under this influence she was a changed creature. So the Tramp and the girl remained for some while, each petrifying the other with the strange hypnotism of a horror-burnt gaze. The Tramp first recovered speech and action. He pushed a hand before him, motioning renunciation.

"Take it," he said, in a thick voice. "Take it, if yer wants it."

The child, receiving, instead of blows, a gift, was yet speechless. She did not understand.

"I never 'urt any of you," went on

the Tramp, becoming almost plaintive, as plaintive as his weather-worn voice would permit, "I never did, really. I never larfed at you even—not like others. If yer wants the chicken, take it and welcome."

The child began to realize.

"You—you means I can 'ave it?" she said, eagerly.

"Welcome to it, welcome!" cried the Tramp, wagging his head in vigorous assertion.

"An'—an' yer won't boot me, nor nuthink?"

"Now I arsts yer," expostulated the vagabond, spreading his tattered arms, "'ow could I? Even if I wanted ter, which I never did—no never. Not even once, s'w'elp me!"

Without more words the child set her teeth into the deep breast of the fowl greedily. The Tramp rubbed his eyes, he looked again and rubbed once more.

"I'm dreamin', that's wot I am," he muttered; "'oo ever 'eard—bloomin' fairies eatin' chicken? It's a dream, that's wot."

The child continued to devour the meat.

"I'll wake up soon," said the Tramp, with hesitation, and then, doubtful whether it were dream or no: "Yer couldn't—if it's no offence, miss—yer couldn't git me a bit o' terbaccer, p'r'aps? No offence, of course, but for the chicken, y' know."

The child stared at him.

"No offence, no offence," said the Tramp, hurriedly, "only bein' a vegetable like—I thort."

"But," asked the girl, "were'd I get t'baccy from?"

"I thought," said the Tramp again, and waved his hands, "you know—magic a bit——"

A sketched fear came into the girl's eyes.

"Is he dotty?" she thought, but aloud: "What made yer think I was a Sammon and Gluckstein?"

"Sammon and Gluck!" said the Tramp, bewildered. "It's a dream, ole man, it's a dream." He furtively pinched himself hard. "'Ow," he added, as the pinch took effect.

"Look 'ere," said the child, her natural urban impudence encouraged by the man's strange deference, "'oo are yer gittin' at?"

"Gittin' at?" said the man. "I wasn't. Only bein' a fairy like, I thort——"

"Fairy?" said the child, "wot they 'as in pantermines? 'E's dotty all right," she thought again to herself, and glanced quickly behind her to see if the path of escape were clear.

"Pantermines!" cried the Tramp; "but ain't yer a fairy, with yer daisy crown an' all?"

"Fairy?" said the girl again; "oh, cheese it!"

"Then," muttered the Tramp, sinking into himself, as it were, "it is haunted. A ghost—though ghosts eatin' chicken——" His hands quivered.

"Ghost," retorted the girl. "Ghost nix. I'm lorst, that's wot. Lorst, d' yer cop it?"

"Lorst!" ejaculated the Tramp; "you ain't no sperrit?"

"Wot you've been drinkin'!" said the girl. "Do I look like it?"

"Well, I'm——" said the Tramp, recovering his sang-froid, now that he had humanity and no mysterious exhalation of nature to deal with. Then, brusquely realizing too that this mere humanity was absorbing his breakfast, "'Ere, 'and over that chicken."

"But you give it me," said the girl.

"I thort——" answered the Tramp, but waved aside even the memory of the contretemps. "Lucky I don't give you an 'iding into the bargain. 'And it hover. 'Ad enuff you 'as, anyway."

Reluctantly the child surrendered the skeleton of the chicken, for though, indeed, she had stayed the immediate qualms of her hunger, greed remained. The Tramp, rising, placed the carcass again out of reach on the high shelf of the chimney, and, ere he sat down, flung a great armful of wood upon the diminishing fire.

"Stay in the warmth if yer likes," he said, kindly enough.

For some while there was silence, both man and child staring into the glow, while behind them on the ceiling and the walls the shadows held saraband and tarantella. The influence of the deserted house from which the Tramp by his weariness and the girl by her ignorance had been partially armoured, now reinforced by the ghostly contagion of personalities, laid hands on them, the accumulations of silence over-pressed them, driving out all thought of sleep, insinuating a thin suspicion.

At last:—

"Wasn't you afraid?" said the Tramp.

"Of you?" asked the girl. "Go on."

"Of me—no. Of this." He waved his arm backwards.

"Of this?" asked the girl. "Why? Were you?"

"It was here or nowhere," said the Tramp, "here or nowhere. And it's cold on the Downs. Besides, it's the yokels say it, and I don't believe *them*, not much—and one can always get out, if the door's open." He squinted back to reassure himself.

"But," asked the slum child, "wot's there to be frightened of?"

"Ah," said the Tramp, drawing slowly from himself with the air of one who had pondered much, "wot's there ever to be frightened of? 'Ceptin' perhaps bein' chased by a dorg and bein' bit. Police, they don't count; quod, that don't count;

The Tramp set the flute to his lips. He played well. The flames danced with the music, and the shadows danced with the flames."

an' w'en yer die—well, you've got to sometime, so that don't count—much. Even dorgs—well, dorgs now—seems to me, speaking honest now, even dorgs 'as their uses. Teaches you you was alive, as it were, and—and how much man you are; you never know what a man really is till you've scampered with a dorg snappin' be'ind—not really known. No mistake. Yet—one is frightened—orften. Y' see, I've thort of these things sometimes."

"I dessay," said the child, "but wot's here?" She imitated his backward gesture.

"Here?" went on the Tramp, looking round. "Oh, well, here. If you don't know—why, what's the use? Besides, it's only yokels' talk. Who believes farmers? Still—to-morrow, perhaps, no use to-night—no use to-night."

"But what is it?" persisted the child.

"Oh, well," said the Tramp, looking suddenly again at the open door, "it is a shivery sort of place, now, isn't it? Doesn't look healthy. Eh? But, Lord! If I believed all them 'Odges say. If I wanted to believe 'em."

He paused to ponder.

"You're town. I can see that," he continued. "So was I wonce. You don't know the country—I do. I bet there ain't one square yard in Hengland where my feet ain't patted the clod. Town now, it's all the same, it's all square and straight and hard underfoot, and bobbies at the crossings, and lights—all made out and looked after, all hard and cornery; but the country's different. It's soft, that's wot it is, soft. You can't get its shape. You may think things, but you never know. They say there's fairies, an' ghosts, an' sperrits. But you never know, not the real trooth; anyway, they never did me no 'arm. I'd sooner trust them than farmers, anyhow. Sometimes evenings, going down the hedgerows, I've thought things into them hedges, goblins hanging like bats in the branches and little thin foggy chaps thridding through the grass, and they always was laughing. But night-time down a havenue, specially poplars, you'd think great fellows chasing you, and footsteps behind, but nothing ever happens. And the wind in the branches sighs like there were folks shut up, but there isn't, really, you know—you think that way; that's the country."

"And them butterflies blowin' about like bits of coloured paper," interrupted the child, "but artful."

"There's nothing in towns," went on the man, pursuing his own train of thought—"doors shut like mouths that can't speak, and windows like dead eyes. But out here in the country—why, it's different. There's always something, something round the corner. Something great, queer maybe, but big anyhow, shadowy, hanging half up in the air like a low cloud. But that never happens neither; you go round the corner and it isn't there. It's round the next—always round the next. But that makes no difference. Round the next corner you're a giant, ten feet high, six feet to a step—but you aren't, you know, but round the corner. Often I've wondered and wondered—what it was. Always this—wotever it is—you never catch up. Sometimes I thought it was one thing, sometimes I thought it was something else. Then I thought it was 'world without end.' Amen corner—the big bust-up. You never know what that is, not really. You don't feel that in towns—no. There's too much—too much to-morrow in towns. To-day doesn't count. And that's in houses too. Pull these houses down they do in towns, to make new red brick boxes; but here in country houses you don't know what's round the corner, or in the next room." He peered round at the mazy pattern of shadow behind him. "And then they think things. Because it's a mournful, lonely house, damp, and then things that has happened may be——"

"What things?" said the child.

"Oh," replied the man, "just things. So they say."

To change the subject, he fumbled in his pocket and pulled out a small flute.

"Wot's the good of talkin'?" he said. "Put some more sticks on the fire, kid, an' we'll 'ave a toon."

HE set the instrument to his lips. He played well. The liquid notes rippled from the wooden pipe, sometimes as falling drops of some pure translucent fluid, sometimes seeming to swell and run in iridescent chain, as go the quivering bubbles on the rapids of some mountain tarn, and to dance gambolling away through the open door into the darkness. In the firelight the Tramp's face, with its puckered lips and its weather-beaten nose, was like the carving of some old Satyr; on the stops his mahogany fingers flickered, nimble despite their graved and swollen knuckles. The flames danced with the music, and the shadows danced with the flames. The Tramp passed from air to air without a rest; queer airs they were, too, the girl thought, some didn't seem to have tune at all. His fingers flew faster, trills and cascades of notes flitted into the melody, as though birds were flinging him interruptions. In the firelight the sweat glistened on the Tramp's brow.

Suddenly—silence. The music stopped in the middle of a cadenza. The Tramp's fingers hung motionless in the air, his eyes

swung in his sockets, their whites gleamed out, marking his face with an expression of fear. The silence profound was broken only by the Tramp's deep-chested breathing. Slowly he straightened his eyes till he looked at the girl.

"What was that?" he said.

"What?"

"Didn't you hear nothing?"

"No," she said, "only you."

"Ah," said the Tramp, and, after a pause, "that's the way you think things."

And he set the flute once more to his lips. But the inspiration was gone from him. He played but a few bars and then, dropping the flute, stared into the fire.

"Talking's better," he said; "music twists you up that."

"Don't you play tunes?" asked the girl.

"You wait till you've heard them oftener," replied the Tramp; "them's the finest tunes, that you can't pick out first go off. Them tumpty-tums—them four-cornered tunes—don't mean nothing. Drugs your mind to sleep they do; but you wait, kid, till you know them tunes, and till I play them to you out there on the highlands in the wind up to Yorkshire, or deep in a green Dorset wood. Them's the tunes of the country, not town tunes, no. Them town tunes come round and round, over and over again, like they live their lives. Same for everybody, rich or poor, no difference—living in boxes, dying in boxes, buried in boxes. I know; I've lived it—rich or poor don't make no difference, they wants the same things, in the same way; they gets the same things, in the same way. The poor woman's joy in her new baby-cart is the same as the rich one's in her moty-car; jest the same an' lasts jest as long, till ter-morrer—or jest so long as they can crow over somebody else about it. They don't live: they works, or they fools so's to forget they're livin', afraid to live, that's wot it is, or livin' to work an' workin' to live. Livin' isn't workin', or killin' things, or throwin' balls about; livin' is seein' things, an' smellin' things, an' tastin' things, an'—an' makin' things into tunes, and that-like—that's livin'. Livin' is running away from dorgs, an' poachin' rabbits—an' you do live with a dorg behind, vivid, I can tell yer. But it's no good saying these things to you, you can't understand. You're a woman, an' don't you forget it's women make the prisons men live in."

The child did not answer because, as the Tramp had said, she did not understand; she still thought he was a mild lunatic.

"AYE, I know women," said the Tramp, shaking his head at the fire; "silken women, too, I've known, and all alike, 'cept one I remember. Only she was too much. It's all very well livin', but you don't want to splash it about. Camping out they was, three men and three women, in two tents. Younger, too, I was in them days, good-looking in a way. I used ter play to 'em, an' they painted me. Artists they was. One of them gals had deep eyes, that you looked down into, and risked to get drowned in. Looked into 'em I did and played her tunes. I've forgotten them tunes now—they didn't count, just madness tunes they was. She'd a come if I'd played longer to her, but I wouldn't have her. I never wanted that sort—not for long, that is. They'll take the heart from you, aye and split it open for red to paint their lips with. So I played to her and with her, but even she couldn't live like a real man, she had to live like a drunkard."

He sat silent for a while, fingering his flute. Then, putting it to his lips, essayed a few tentative notes, but broke off.

"No, no," he said, "I can't—nor want to."

But he set the pipe again to his mouth, and played the haunting wood-wind aria from "The Magic Flute." When he had finished, and the ghost of the final note had fled into the dark garden, the girl saw that a tear had run from his eye and glistened on his cheek.

"Ah," he said, flicking the tear away with a crooked finger. "*She* wouldn't come.

"Them days," he went on, "I lived in that town, played orchestra, I did. You know what that is?"

"Yes," said the girl, "that black hole where the music comes from, with the red curtains."

"Near enough," said the man; "that's when I learnt that tune. That's what sent me into the country, to a man's life. Played that night after night, I did; it was my part, solo. And it seemed so silly, sitting there, playing that tune in that stuffy, cramped hole. Blowing it into the back of the chap in front of you, when it sang of open fields and woods and breaking buds. And all you could look at was the red neck of a fat clarionet. Made me think, that tune did. Me, what had never thort before. And at night-time I'd walk back from the theatre, and all them upstairs windows alight, and that was life, lived in a box up against the sky. Happiness in a box for an hour at night; and then in the end—another box, only a smaller one. But I never saw clear till one time, when the theatre was shut, some of us got a job for a concert in the country, and the cart broke down and we had to walk. Most of the chaps were cursing at it, which I didn't like, so I went on quick and got ahead, and lorst myself proper. Somehow I didn't mind then, it was August and warm. There was scents in the hedges and flowers in the

woods. It was the first time I'd been properly alone in the country, an' I just let the concert party go, and enjoyed myself. And there were birds in the branches, so I just out with my flute and played against them, and a fine concert we had. I thought I was alone, but when I finished there was a clear clapping and a girl standing near by.

"'Play some more,' she said, 'play some more.'"

The Tramp put the pipe again to his lips and played the air of "The Magic Flute."

"Played her that, I did," he said. "But she wanted to shut me up in a box," he went on, almost angrily, as if rebuking himself, "wanted to shut me up. A week I hung about there spending more than I could afford, and I found a new soul. Saw her and freedom together, in one picture as it were. Her in front, and Nature behind. Laughed at me, they did, when I got back, but I could afford to let 'em laugh, I had learned things. Yes, I had. Clerk in a shop she was, and not very far from me, so we came back together. And then Sundays we'd go out, to Hampstead or Hendon, or even farther sometimes, only that cost a lot. And I'd talk to her about the country and about freedom, and she agreed with her lips and with her eyes. But never in her heart, because she didn't—couldn't—understand. When spring came, I had made up my mind. I would take her by the hand, and together we would walk away, into the open country. I knew it could be done.

"Then I found she hadn't understood. All that talk with her was slop—just raving about the country because others did, and it was a nice place to holiday in. At last, because I loved her, because she loved me, too, and because she still didn't understand, I persuaded her. Got married we did, and in the fine summer away we went, me with a pack on my back and me little flute in the pocket. We took the train out of London till it was deep in the country by Epping, and then off we set. I was like a young boy

"Pulling out his pipe, the Tramp began to play, and still playing disappeared from view. Suddenly

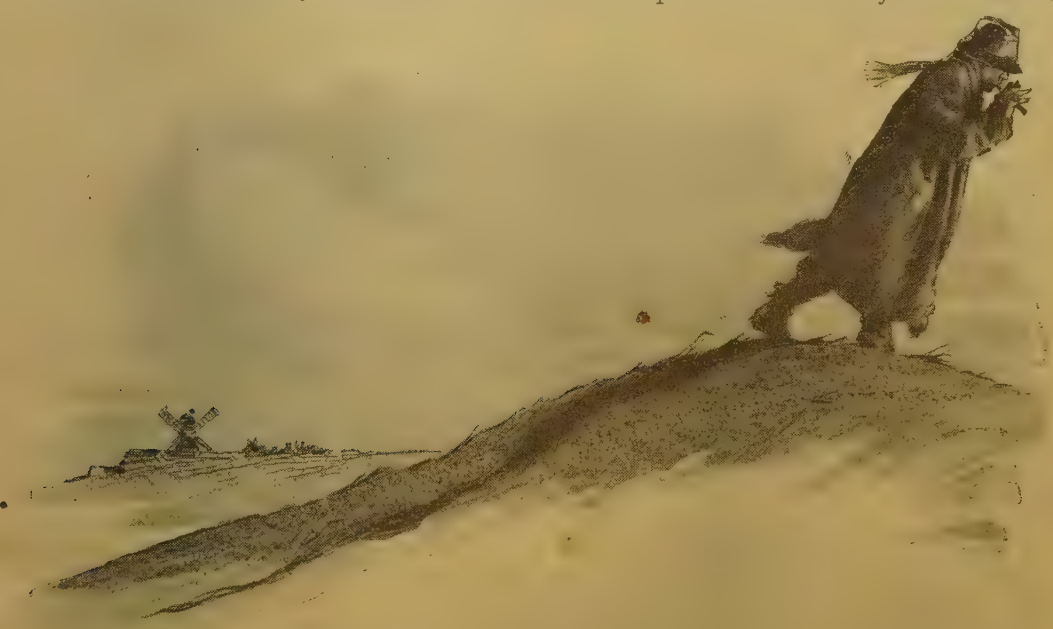
just set free from school, an' like some prisoner escaped. Nothing, I thought, could touch our happiness. Couldn't it? Pah!" He paused.

"Tight boots!" he ejaculated, and spat into the waning fire. "Before we'd done twelve miles," he went on, plaintively, "would you believe it? Twelve miles only, and all my happiness was running out of her eyes in tears. Proud she was of her small feet, prouder of having feet than she was of being alive. Dragged me back, them feet did, back into the red brick boxes, where I couldn't make up tunes, because they would come all square, each corner the same. Six months I stayed in them brick prisons, and me with my soul dancing out on the free lanes. Six months and our tempers gone, me dissatisfied, she knowing it, and her cursed boots, the boots that had kicked my happiness into oblivion, lying about everywhere. What I'd a done if a bloomin' uncle hadn't a died and left her some money, I dunno. Anyway, leave it he did, enough to get along on comfortable as she was used to. So I 'opped it."

"Did a bunk!" said the child, eagerly.

"Bunk it was," answered the Tramp. 'Kissed 'er after breakfast I did, walked out of the 'ouse, and never back. All the way down the street things was calling me to go back; I thought what we 'ad been, and if there might appear a kid—which there didn't—and how I might persuade her to come now—but I knew it was no go. The money stood in the way. She would want things. You can't be free if you want things; the only way you can get all you want is by wanting nothing, that's the way of 'appiness. But so soon as you want things, you may as well live in brick boxes. I wanted 'er, and there I was in a brick box. I wanted the country and my tunes; that kind of want's different. It's all right, only I wanted 'er too. I couldn't 'ave gone back, not for 'er 'appiness nor for mine. It was a dreadful day, I remember, but when I got away from London I went shouting through the rain. I slept all night soaked in a 'ay-stack, wanting 'er bad now I was away from 'er, but I never went back. I've wanted 'er, nigh on twenty-seven years, I want 'er still, but I don't go back. Wot's the good? I've known other women since, but never the same, and never it made any difference. Sometimes I've tried to comfort myself by thinkin' that what I wanted hadn't never lived at all—never was. But that didn't make any difference, for whether it was or whether it wasn't, I wanted it jest the same. And yet perhaps I've been happier because I've never really been certain, as it were. Happier than she was maybe, because she couldn't think things and be glad about them, though about real things she was merrier than me. So I've made up tunes about her, but they were never her like this one."

He played the little melody once again. The dawn was coming up, the deserted garden outside was greying against its dark wall and trees, the salient objects in the room took on blue shapes. The fire had by now sunk into



the child came to a decision. Crying out that he should wait for her, she ran after him."

a heap of dull, reverberant ash. The Tramp shivered slightly and thrust the pipe into a pocket of one of his several coats.

"'Ere," he said, reaching up for the carcass. "Breakfass, kiddo," and he rent it in two pieces with resolute fingers. As he was gnawing, he glanced round the mouldering kitchen.

"Haunted," he mumbled; "they said it was haunted. All sorts of tales."

"Tell us?" said the child.

"Not worth it," answered the Tramp. "If you live in brick boxes, you pay for it, that's all. Haunted—all houses are haunted, haunted by what man could a been and wasn't, by dreams left to rot—we're all haunted—every bloomin' one." And he fell again on the chicken bones.

When he stood once more outside the rusty gate, he looked down at the child.

"Where's your home?" he asked.

"Brixton," she answered.

"What's father doin'?"

"'Aven't one," she said.

"Mother?"

"Popped orf. Arntie looks after me, when she ain't jugged."

"Look 'ere," said the Tramp, "you 'aven't a gay life, I bet, or your face wouldn't 'ave growed that peaked way. Come along to me. Try this one, an' I'll teach you to play."

"I—I dunno," said the child, shrinking from his hand. The country stretched so broadly on every side—so huge. The Tramp still looked down on her—there was pity in his eyes.

"Well," he said, "please yourself. That's your way to the village," and he pointed with his ashen stick, "straight across there—and to Brixton."

He turned round the wall and set off across the grass. As he went the new-risen sun flung his shadow, like a long pennant waving gently, over the hummocks and undulations of the Down. The girl stood now looking after him, now gazing in the direction he had indicated. She saw him set himself against the slope, walking steadily. Just as he topped the lip of the cup, he waved a good-bye, and then pulling out his pipe he began to play, and still playing disappeared from view.

The notes of "The Magic Flute" came faintly on the clear sweet morning air.

Suddenly the child came to a decision.

Crying out that he should wait for her, she ran after him.

PERPLEXITIES.

By HENRY E. DUDENEY.

509.—PUNCTUATION.

THIS is a little exercise in the art of punctuation. A man wrote this sentence just as it appears, without any stops whatever: "If is is not is and is not is is what is it is not is and what is it is is not if is not is is." It will be seen that without punctuation the sentence is meaningless. Can you make sense of it?

510.—A CRYPTIC MONOGRAM.

A LADY correspondent enclosed this queer monogram in a letter to me and I put it aside for consideration. When I recently came across it and interpreted its meaning I smiled and asked myself whether by any chance the accompanying letter, which was destroyed, was sent to me on St. Valentine's Day. I wonder! The reader will understand why when he has succeeded in discovering the monogram's meaning.

511.—THE CLERK'S MISTAKE.

CAPTAIN WISEHEAD had a careless clerk who, in typing correspondence, had a bad habit of repeating a word or words. This so annoyed him that he told the clerk that the very next time he made an error of this kind he would be discharged. The next day the clerk brought him a letter to sign concerning the wrongful dismissal of a certain man and his subsequent rehabilitation. The concluding sentence of the typewritten document ran: "As he reinstated as he reinstated the man in question, I submit that the matter may be allowed to drop."

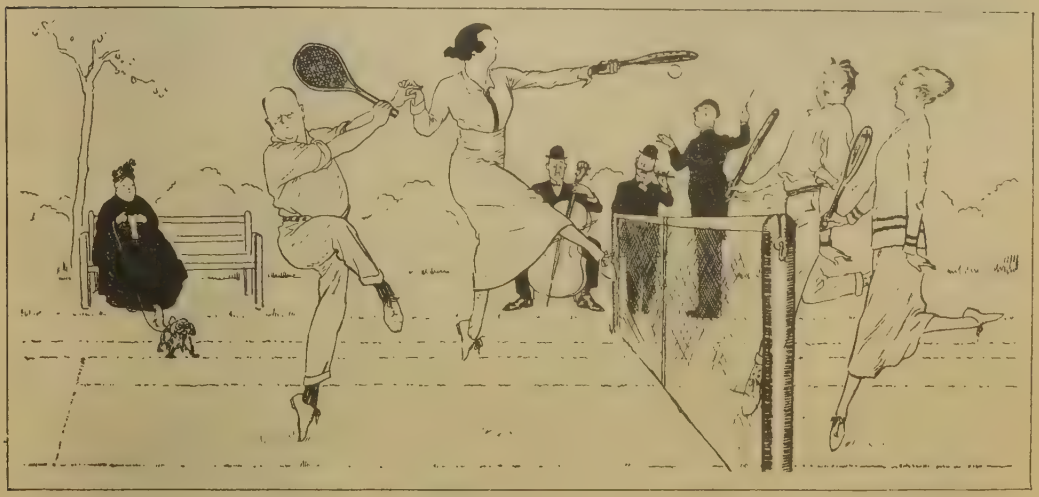
Pointing to the duplication of the first three words, the Captain informed his clerk that he would have to go. "I admit, sir," said the clerk, "that I have made a slight error, but I protest that there is not one single letter too many or too few in what I have written." "Very well," said the Captain, "if you can prove that to me you may remain." How did the clerk prove his case and how should the amended sentence read?

512.—CHANGING THE SUIT.

THIS is a rather easy cutting-out puzzle. Yet it may perplex the reader for some minutes. You are simply asked to cut the Spade into three pieces that will fit together and form a Heart. Of course, no part of the material may be wasted, or it would be absurd, since it would be necessary merely to cut away the stem of the Spade.

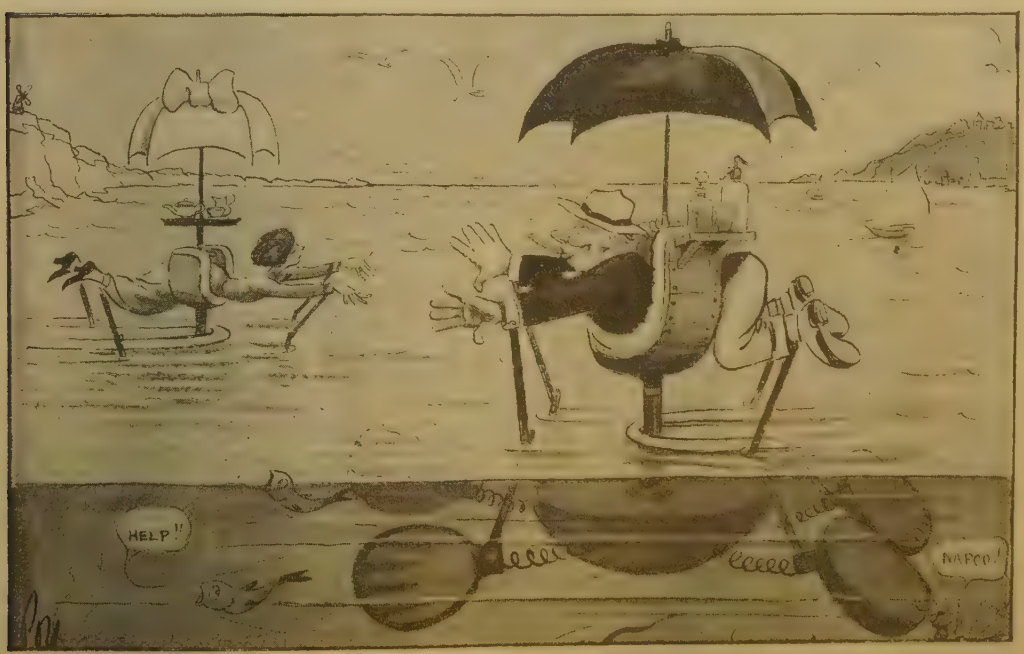
IMPROVING OUR SPORTS.

Some Suggestions by Our Artists.



ALL GAMES OF TENNIS SHOULD BE ARRANGED BY SIR J. M. BARRIE AND PLAYED À LA RUSSIAN BALLET.

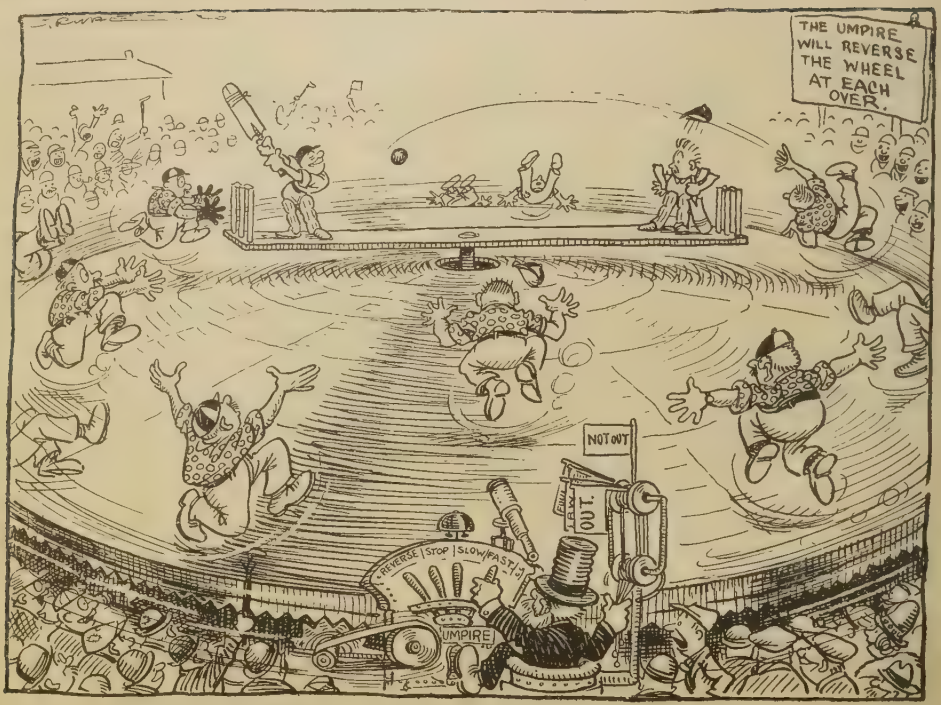
Drawn by Robin.



"LITTLE DINKIE DRYPADDLE."

THE DRY SWIM! CAN YOU IMAGINE ANYTHING MORE DELIGHTFUL? SWIMMING WITHOUT WETNESS! BATHING WITHOUT UNDRESSING! LIKE ALL GREAT INVENTIONS, THIS IS SIMPLICITY ITSELF. THE BATHER WOULD REST IN A COMFORTABLE SUPPORT RISING FROM A SUBMERGED FLOAT, WITH ANKLES AND WRISTS ATTACHED TO PADDLES. AN UMBRELLA OR SUNSHADE COULD BE ADDED, WHILE A SHELF WOULD CARRY SMOKES, TEA, AND PUSSYFOOT DRINKS OR REAL REFRESHMENTS, AND, AS A FINAL ADVANTAGE, THERE WOULD BE NO TRYING TO COAX BACK DAMP CLOTHES OVER A STICKY SKIN.

Drawn by Poy.



THE CRICKET-FIELD OF THE FUTURE MIGHT BE ON THE "WHIRLIGIG" PRINCIPLE, THE SPEED BEING REGULATED BY THE UMPIRE, WHO WOULD REVERSE THE ENGINE AT HIS DISCRETION. THE PLAYERS WOULD HAVE TO "TREADMILL" ALL THE TIME, AND IF ANY FIELDER LOST HIS BALANCE SIX RUNS WOULD BE COUNTED TO THE BATTING SIDE. THE PITCH ITSELF WOULD BE FIXED, BUT IF A BATSMAN FAILED TO HIT A BOUNDARY IN TWO SUCCESSIVE OVERS THE UMPIRE WOULD SET THE PITCH IN MOTION, BUT IN THE OPPOSITE DIRECTION TO THAT OF THE FIELD.

Drawn by Strube.

A VACUUM CLEANER APPLIED TO FISHING WOULD DISPENSE WITH THE UNPLEASANT NECESSITY FOR HOOKS AND BAIT—NOT TO MENTION LANDING-NETS.

Drawn by W. H. Cobb.

CRICKET, IF PLAYED À LA MR. HEATH ROBINSON, WOULD BE A VERY RESTFUL GAME COMPARED WITH THE STRENUOUS PASTIME DEPICTED BY MR. STRUBE ON THE OPPOSITE PAGE.

Drawn by W. Heath Robinson.

BOWLS MIGHT BE CONSIDERABLY BRIGHTENED IF THE "JACK" WERE PLACED IN THE CENTRE OF THE GREEN AND ON THE WORD "GO!"—OR THE FIRING OF A PISTOL—ALL THE PLAYERS WERE TO BOWL SIMULTANEOUSLY.

Drawn by Ridgewell.

PANTOMIME POLO AT RANELAGH.

Drawn by George Morrow.

THE STRAND MAGAZINE

August, 1920

"THE CONSTABLE CROSSED TO THE WINDOW AND LEANED OUT. 'HERE'S THE BODY, SIR,' HE CRIED. 'OUTSIDE IN THE FLOWER-BED.'"

(*See page* 101.)

The GREEN DEATH

By

H. C. McNEILE ("SAPPER")

ILLUSTRATED BY CHAS CROMBIE

I.

"AND why, Major Seymour, do they call you 'Old Point of Detail'?"

The tall, spare man, with a face tanned by years in the tropics, turned at the question, and glanced at the girl beside him. At the time when most boys are still at school, force of circumstances had sent him far afield into strange corners of the earth—a wanderer, and picker-up of odd jobs. He had done police work in India; he had been on a rubber plantation in Sumatra. The Amazon knew him and so did the Yukon, while his knowledge of the customs of tribes in Darkest Africa—the very names of which were unknown to most people—was greater than the average Londoner has of his native city. In fact, before the war it would have been difficult to sit for an evening in one of those clubs which spring into being in all corners where Englishmen guard their far-flung inheritance without Bob Seymour's name cropping up.

Then had come the war, and in the van of the great army from the mountains and the swamps which trekked home as the first shot rang out, he came. As his reward he got a D.S.O. and one leg permanently shortened by two inches. He also met a girl—the girl who had just asked him the question.

He'd met her just a year after the Armistice, when he was wondering whether there was any place for a cripple in the lands that he knew. And from that day everything had changed. Even to himself he wouldn't admit it; the thought of asking such a glorious bit of loveliness to tie herself to a useless has-been like himself was out of the question. But he let the days slip by, content to meet her occasionally at dinner—to see her, in the distance, at a theatre. And now, for the first time, he found himself staying under the same roof. When he'd arrived the preceding day and had seen her in the hall, just for a moment his heart had stopped beating, and then had given a great bound forward. She, of course, knew nothing of his feelings; of that he felt sure. And she must never know; of that he was determined. The whole thing was out of the question.

Of course—naturally. And the only comment which a mere narrator of facts can offer on the state of affairs is to record the remark made by Ruth Brabazon to a very dear friend of hers after Bob Seymour had limped upstairs to his room.

"That's the man, Delia," she said, with a little smile. "And if he doesn't say something soon, I shall have to."

"He looks a perfect darling," remarked the other.

"He is," sighed Ruth. "But he *won't* give me the chance of telling him so. He thinks he's a cripple."

With which brief insight into things as they really were, we can now return to things as Bob Seymour thought they were. Beside him, on a sofa in the hall, sat the girl who had kept him in England through long months, and she had just asked him a question.

"The Old, I trust, is a term of endearment," he answered, with a smile, "and not a brutal reflection on my tale of years. The Point of Detail refers to a favourite saying of mine with which my reprobate subalterns—of whom your brother was quite the worst—used to mock me."

"Bill is the limit," murmured the girl. "What was the saying?"

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"I used to preach the importance of Points of Detail to 'em," he grinned. "One is nothing; two are a coincidence; three are a moral certainty. And they're very easy to see if you have eyes to see them with."

"I suppose they are, Old Point of Detail," she replied, softly.

Was it his imagination or did she lay a faint stress on the Old?

"It was certainly a term of endearment," she continued, deliberately, "if what Bill says is to be believed."

"Oh! Bill's an ass," said Seymour, sheepishly.

"Thank you," she remarked, and he noticed her eyes were twinkling. "I've always been told I'm exactly like Bill. I know we always used to like the same things when we were children." She rose and crossed the hall. "Time to dress for dinner, I think."

In the dim light he could not see her face clearly; he only knew his heart was thumping wildly. Did she mean——? And then from half-way up the stairs she spoke again.

"Two are certainly a coincidence," she agreed, thoughtfully. "But the third would have to be pretty conclusive before you could take it as a certainty."

II.

"WELL, Major Seymour, hitting 'em in the beak?" The Celebrated Actor mixed himself a cocktail with that delicate grace for which he was famed on both sides of the Atlantic.

"So—so, Mr. Trayne," returned the other. "All the easy ones came my way."

The house-party were in the hall waiting for dinner to be announced, but the one member of it who mattered to Bob Seymour had not yet appeared.

"Rot, my dear fellow," said his host, who had come up in time to hear his last remark. "Your shooting was magnificent—absolutely magnificent. You had four birds in the air once from your guns."

"Personally," murmured the Celebrated Actor, "it fails to appeal to me. Apart from my intense fright at letting off lethal weapons, I have never yet succeeded in hitting anything except a keeper or—more frequently—a guest. I abhor violence—except at rehearsals." He broke off as a heavy, bull-necked man came slowly down the stairs. "And who is the latest addition to our number, Sir Robert?"

"A man who did me a good turn a few weeks ago," said the owner of the house, shortly. "Name of Denton. Arrived half an hour ago."

He moved away to introduce the newcomer, and the Actor turned to Bob Seymour.

"One wonders," he remarked, "whether it would be indiscreet to offer Mr. Denton a part in my new play. Nothing much to say. He merely drinks and eats. In effect, a publican of unprepossessing aspect. One wonders—so suitable." He placed his empty glass on the table and drifted charmingly away towards his hostess, leaving Bob Seymour smiling gently. Undoubtedly a most suitable part for Mr. Denton.

And then, quite suddenly, the smile died away. Bill Brabazon, who was standing near the fireplace, had turned round and come face to face with the new-comer. For a moment or two they stared at one another—a deadly loathing on their faces; then with ostentatious rudeness Denton turned his back and walked away.

"My God! Bob," muttered Bill, coming up to Seymour. "How on earth did that swine-emperor get here?"

His jaw was grim and set, his eyes gleaming with rage; and the hand that poured out the cocktail shook a little.

"What's the matter, Bill?" said Seymour, quietly. "For Heaven's sake, don't make a scene, old man!"

"Matter!" choked Bill Brabazon. "Matter! Why——"

But any further revelations were checked by the announcement of dinner, and the party went in informally. To his delight, Bob Seymour found himself next to Ruth, and the little scene he had just witnessed passed from his mind. It was not until they were half-way through the meal that it was recalled to him by Ruth herself.

"Who is that dreadful-looking man talking to Delia Morrison?" she whispered.

"Denton is his name," replied Seymour, and every vestige of colour left her face.

"Denton," she muttered. "Good heavens! it can't be the same." She glanced round the table till she found her brother, who was answering the animated remarks of his partner with morose monosyllables. "Has Bill——"

"Bill has," returned Seymour, grimly. "And he's whispered to me on the subject. What's the trouble?"

"They had the most fearful row—over a girl," she explained, a little breathlessly. "Two or three months ago. I know they had a fight, and Bill got a black eye. But he broke that other brute's jaw."

"Holy smoke!" muttered Seymour. "The meeting strikes the casual observer as being, to put it mildly, embarrassing. Do you know how the row started?"

"Only vaguely," she answered. "That man Denton got some girl into trouble, and then left her in the lurch—refused to help

her at all. A poor girl—the daughter of someone who had been in Bill's platoon. And he came to Bill."

"I see," said Seymour, grimly. "I see. Bill would."

"Of course he would!" she cried. "Why, of course. Just the same as you would."

"I suppose that isn't pretty conclusive?" he said, with a grin. "As a third point, I mean."

But Ruth Brabazon had turned to the Celebrated Actor on her other side. He had already said, "My dear young lady" five times without avail, and he was Very Celebrated.

NEGLECTED for the moment by both his neighbours, Bob proceeded to study the gentleman whose sudden arrival seemed so inopportune. He was a coarse-looking specimen, and already his face was flushed with the amount of wine he had drunk. Every now and then his eyes sought Bill Brabazon vindictively, and Seymour frowned as he saw it. Denton belonged to a type he had met before, and it struck him there was every promise of trouble before the evening was out. When men of Denton's calibre get into the condition of "drink-taken," such trifles as the presence of other guests in the house do not deter them from being offensive. And Bill Brabazon, though far too well-bred to seek a quarrel in such surroundings, was also far too hot-tempered to take any deliberate insult lying down.

Suddenly a coarse, overloud laugh from Denton sounded above the general conversation, and Ruth Brabazon looked round quickly.

"Ugh! what a horrible man!" she whispered to Bob. "How I hate him!"

"I don't believe a word of it," he was saying, harshly. "Fraud by knaves for fools. For those manifestations that have been seen there is some material cause. Generally transparent trickery." He laughed again, sneeringly.

For a second or two there was an uncomfortable silence. It was not so much what the man had said, as the vulgar, ill-bred manner in which he had said it, and Sir Robert hastily intervened to relieve the tension.

"Ghosts?" he remarked. "As impossible a subject to argue about as religion or politics. Incidentally, you know," he continued, addressing the table at large, "there's a room in this house round which a novelist might weave quite a good ghost story."

"Tell us, Sir Robert." A general chorus assailed him, and he smiled.

"I'm not a novelist," he said, "though for what it's worth I'll tell you about it. The room is one in the new wing which I used to use as a smoking-room. It was the part built on to the house by my predecessor—a gentleman, from all accounts, of peculiar temperament. He had spent all his life travelling to obscure places of the world; and I don't know if it was liver or what, but his chief claim to notoriety when he did finally settle down appears to have been an intense hatred of his fellow-men. There are some very strange stories of the things which used to go on in this house, where he lived the life of an absolute recluse, with one old man to look after him. He died about forty years ago."

Sir Robert paused and sipped his champagne.

"However, to continue. In this smoking-room in the new wing there is an inscription written in the most amazing jumble of letters by the window. It is written on the wall, and every form of hieroglyphic is used. You get a letter of Arabic, then one of Chinese, then an ordinary English one, and perhaps a German. Well, to cut a long story short, I took the trouble one day to copy it out, and replaced the foreign letters—there are one or two Greek letters as well—by their corresponding English ones. I had to get somebody else to help me over the Chinese and Arabic, but the result was, at any rate, sense. It proved to be a little jingling rhyme, and it ran as follows:—

When 'tis hot, shun this spot.
When 'tis rain, come again.
When tis day, all serene.
When 'tis night, death is green."

Sir Robert glanced round the table with a smile.

"There was no doubt who had written this bit of doggerel, as the wing was actually built by my predecessor—and I certainly didn't. That's a pretty good foundation to build a ghost story on, isn't it?"

"But have you ever seen anything?" inquired one of the guests.

"Not a thing," laughed his host. "But"—he paused mysteriously—"I've smelt something. And that's the reason why I don't use the room any more.

"It was a very hot night—hotter even than this evening. There was thunder about—incidentally, I shouldn't be surprised if we had a storm before to-morrow—and I was sitting in the room after dinner, reading the paper. All of a sudden I became aware of a strange and most unpleasant smell: a sort of fetid, musty, rank smell, like you get sometimes when you open up an old vault. And at the same moment I noticed that the paper I held in my hand had gone a most peculiar green colour and I could no longer see the print clearly. It seemed to have got darker suddenly, and the smell became so bad that it made me feel quite faint.

"I walked over to the door and left the room, meaning to get a lamp. Then something detained me, and I didn't go back for half an hour or so. When I did the smell was still there, though so faint that one could hardly notice it. Also the paper was quite white again." He laughed genially. "And that's the family ghost; a poor thing, but our own. I'll have to get someone to take it in hand and bring it up-to-date."

"But surely you don't think there is any connection between this smell and the inscription?" cried Denton

"I advance no theory at all." Sir Robert smiled genially. "All I can tell you is that there is an inscription, and that the colour green is mentioned in it. It seemed to me most certainly that my paper went green, though it is even more certain that I did not die. Also there is at times in the room this rather unpleasant smell. I told you it was a poor thing in the ghost line."

The conversation became general, and Ruth Brabazon turned to Bob, who was thoughtfully staring at his plate.

"Why so preoccupied, Major Seymour?"

"A most interesting yarn," he remarked, coming out of his reverie. "Have a salted almond, before I finish the lot."

III.

TO have two hot-tempered men who loathe one another with a bitter loathing in a house-party is not conducive to its happiness. And when one of them is an outsider of the first water, slightly under the influence of alcohol, the situation becomes even more precarious. For some time after dinner was over Bill Brabazon avoided Denton as unostentatiously as he could, though it was plain to Bob Seymour and Ruth that he was finding it increasingly difficult to control his temper. By ten o'clock it was obvious, even to those guests who knew nothing about the men's previous relations, that there was trouble brewing; and Sir Robert, who had been told the facts of the case by Bob, was at his wits' end.

"If only I'd known," he said, irritably. "If only someone had told me. I know Denton is a sweep, but he did me a very good turn in the City the other day, and, without thinking, I asked him to come and shoot some time. And when he suggested coming now, I couldn't in all decency get out of it. I hope to Heaven there won't be a row."

"If there's going to be, Sir Robert, you can't prevent it," said Seymour. "I'm sure Bill will do all he can to avoid one."

"I know he will," answered his host. "But there are limits, and that man Denton is one of 'em. I wish I'd never met the blighter."

"Come and have a game of billiards, anyway," said the other. "It's no use worrying about it. If it comes, it comes."

When they had been playing about twenty minutes, Ruth Brabazon and Delia Morrison joined them, the billiard-room being, as they affirmed, the coolest room in the house.

"We'll have rain soon," said Sir Robert, bringing off a fine losing hazard off the red. "That'll clear the air."

And shortly afterwards his prophecy proved true. Heavy drops began to patter down on the glass skylight, and the girls heaved a sigh of relief.

"Thank goodness," gasped Ruth. "I couldn't have stood——" She broke off abruptly and stared at the door, which had just opened to admit her brother. "Bill," she cried, "what's the matter?"

Bob Seymour looked up quickly at her words; then he rested his cue against the table. Something very obviously was the matter. Bill Brabazon, his tie undone, with a crumpled shirt, and a cut under his eye on the cheek-bone, came into the room and closed the door.

"I must apologize, Sir Robert," he said, quietly, "for what has happened. It's a rotten thing to have to admit in another man's house, but the fault was not entirely mine. I've had the most damnable row with that fellow Denton—incidentally he was half-drunk—and I've laid him out. An unpardonable thing to do to one of your guests, but—well—I'm not particularly slow-tempered, and I couldn't help it. He went on and on and on—asking for trouble: and finally he got it."

"Damnation!" Sir Robert replaced his cue in the rack. "When did it happen, Bill?"

"About half an hour ago. I've been outside since. Meaning to avoid him I went to the smoking-room in the new wing, and I found him there examining that inscription by the window. I couldn't get away—without running away. I suppose I ought to have." An uncomfortable silence settled on the room, which was broken at length by Sir Robert.

"Where is the fellow now, Bill?"

"I haven't seen him—not since I socked him one on the jaw. I'm deucedly sorry about it," he continued, miserably, "and I feel the most awful sweep, but——"

He stopped suddenly as the door was flung open and the Celebrated Actor rushed in. The magnificent repose which usually stamped his features was gone: it was an agitated and frightened man who stood by the billiard table, pouring out his somewhat incoherent story. And as his meaning became clear Bill Brabazon grew white and leaned against the mantelpiece for support.

" Bill Brabazon, his tie undone, with a crumpled shirt, and a cut under his eye, came into the room. ' I must apologize, Sir Robert,' he said, quietly, ' for what has happened.' "

Dead—Denton dead! That was the salient fact that stood out from the Actor's disjointed sentences.

" To examine the inscription," he was saying. " I went in to examine it—and there—by the window . . . "

" He can't be dead," said Bill, harshly. " He's laid out, that's all."

" Quick! Which is the room? " Bob Seymour's steady voice served to pull everyone together. " There's no good standing here talking——"

In silence they crossed the hall, and went along the passage to the new wing.

" Here we are," said Sir Robert, nervously. " This is the door."

The room was in darkness and in the air there hung a rank, fetid smell. The window was open, and outside the rain was lashing down with tropical violence. Bob Seymour fumbled in his pocket for a match; then he turned up to the lamp and lit it. Just for a moment he stared at it in surprise, then Ruth, from the doorway, gave a little stifled scream.

"Look," she whispered. "By the window——"

A man was lying across the window-sill, with his legs inside the room and his head and shoulders outside.

"Good heavens," muttered Sir Robert, touching the body with a shaking hand. "I suppose—I suppose—he *is* dead?"

But Seymour apparently failed to hear the remark.

"Do you notice this extraordinary smell?" he said, at length.

"Damn the smell," said his host, irritably. "Give me a hand with this poor fellow."

Seymour pulled himself together and stepped forward as the other bent down to take hold of the sagging legs.

"Leave him alone, Sir Robert," he said, quickly. "You must leave the body till the police come. We'll just see that he's dead, and then——"

He picked up an electric torch from the table and leant out of the window. And after a while he straightened up again with a little shudder.

It was not a pretty sight. In the light of the torch the face seemed almost black, and the two arms, limp and twisted, sprawled in the sodden earth of the flower-bed. The man was quite dead, and they both stepped back into the middle of the smoking-room with obvious relief.

"Well," said Brabazon, "Is he——?"

"Yes—he's dead," said Seymour, gravely.

"But it's impossible," cried the boy, wildly. "Why, that blow I gave him couldn't have—have killed the man."

"Nevertheless he's dead," said Seymour, staring at the motionless body, thoughtfully. Then his eyes narrowed, and he bent once more over the dead man. Ruth, sobbing hysterically, was trying to comfort her brother, while the rest of the house-party had collected near the door, talking in low, agitated whispers.

"Bob—Bob," cried Bill Brabazon, suddenly. "I've just remembered. I couldn't have done it when I laid him out. I told you I was walking up and down the lawn. Well, the light from this room was streaming out, and I remember seeing his shadow in the middle of the window. He must have been standing up. The mark of the window-sash was clear on the lawn."

Seymour glanced at him thoughtfully. 'But the light was out, Bill. How do you account for that?"

"It wasn't," said the other, positively. "Not then. It must have gone out later."

"We'll have to send for the police, Sir Robert," said Seymour, laying a reassuring hand on the boy's arm. "Tell them everything when they come."

"I've got nothing to hide," said the youngster, hoarsely. "I swear to Heaven I didn't do that."

"We'd better go," cried Sir Robert. 'Leave everything as it is. I'll ring the police up."

With quick, nervous steps he left the room, followed by his guests, until only Seymour was left standing by the window with its dreadful occupant. For a full minute he stood there, while the rain still lashed down outside, sniffing as he had done when he first entered. And, at length, with a slight frown on his face, as if some elusive memory escaped him, he followed the others from the room, first turning out the light and then locking the door.

IV.

IT was half an hour before the police came, in the shape of Inspector Grayson and a constable. During that time the rain had stopped for a period of about twenty minutes; only to come on again just before a ring announced their arrival.

The house-party were moving aimlessly about in little scattered groups, obsessed with the dreadful tragedy. In the billiard-room Ruth sat with her brother in a sort of stunned silence; only Bob Seymour seemed unaffected by the general strain. Perhaps it was because in a life such as his death by violence was no new spectacle; perhaps it was that there was something he could not understand.

Who had blown the light out? That was the crux. Blown—not turned. The Celebrated Actor was very positive that the light had not been on when he first entered the room. It might have been the wind, but there was no wind. A point of detail—one. And then the smell—that strange, fetid smell. It touched a chord of memory, but try as he would he could not place it.

His mind started on another line. If the boy, in his rage, had struck the dead man a fatal blow, how had the body got into such a position? It would have been lying on the floor.

"Weak heart," he argued. "Hot night—gasping for breath—rushed to window—collapsed. That's what they'd say."

He frowned thoughtfully; on the face of it quite plausible. Not only plausible—quite possible.

"A man was lying across the window-sill, with his legs inside the room and his head and shoulders outside."

"Major Seymour!" Ruth's voice beside him made him look up. "What can we do? Poor old Bill's nearly off his head."

"There's nothing to do, Miss Brabazon—but tell the truth," said Seymour, gravely.

"What I mean is," he explained, hurriedly, "you've got to impress on Bill the vital necessity of being absolutely frank with the police."

"I know he didn't do it, Bob," she cried, desperately. "I know it."

Bob! She'd called him Bob. And such is human nature that for a moment the dead man was forgotten.

"So do I, Ruth," he whispered, impulsively. "So do I."

"And you'll prove it?" she cried.

"I'll prove it," he promised her. Which was no rasher than many promises made under similar conditions.

"Thank goodness you've come, Inspector." Sir Robert had met the police at the door. "A dreadful tragedy."

"So I gather, Sir Robert," answered the other. "One of your guests been murdered?"

"I didn't say so on the 'phone," said Sir Robert. "I said—killed."

The inspector grunted. "Where's the body?"

"In the smoking-room." He led the way towards the door.

"I've got the key in my pocket," said Seymour; and the inspector looked at him quickly.

"May I ask your name, sir?" he remarked.

"Seymour—Major Seymour," returned the other. "I turned out the light and locked the door while Sir Robert was telephoning for you, to ensure that nothing would be moved."

The inspector grunted again, as Seymour opened the door and struck a light.

"Over in that window, Inspector——" began Sir Robert, only to stop and gape foolishly across the room.

"I don't quite understand, gentlemen," said Inspector Grayson, testily.

"No more do I," muttered Bob Seymour, with a puzzled frown.

The window-sill was empty; the body was gone.

"I left him lying, as we found him, half in and half out of the window," said Seymour. "His legs were inside, his head and shoulders from the waist upwards were outside."

It was the constable who interrupted him. While the others were standing by the door he had crossed to the window and leaned out.

"Here's the body, sir," he cried. "Outside in the flower-bed."

The extraordinary solution of this mystery will appear in next month's issue.

IS BETTING A MUG'S GAME?

YES.

By CANON HORSLEY.

Whose writings on the subject are well known.

THE question I am asked is not: "Is betting a cause, fertile and increasing, of crime?" but, "Is it a mug's game?" This definition, mark you, is a quotation from one who had long been on the Turf, and not the utterance of a philosopher or moralist with no special experience. Perhaps the question had better been: "Is *backing* a mug's game?" since the "bookie" bets, generally wins, and often makes a fortune. On this point an old and prosperous bookmaker contributed a very illuminative chapter to Mr. Seebohm Rowntree's "Betting and Gambling, a National Evil." Beginning as most lads do, he was soon "wide enough awake to see that 'backing' was no good, but that bookmaking was the game." His ripe conclusion is that "betting is a one-sided game, and is almost wholly against the backer." Again, "I have never known a backer of horses permanently to succeed." And comprehensively he answers our question: "I am not writing as a moralist or a sentimentalist, but in a purely business way; using common sense to prove to misguided, foolish people that to invest their money in backing horses is a stupid, unwise, unbusinesslike mode, a way that means absolute loss, if not ruin, simply because the chances to win are so great against them that success is next to impossible." A knowledge of the law of averages will keep from betting all who are not "mugs," and when to this are added the inevitable accidents in training or in the race, and the far from unknown swindling on the Turf, nothing but a perfectly irrational presumption will lead the ordinary backer to anticipate any unusual success. So I have found a frequently effectual antidote to the incipient fever to exist in pointing out the absurdity of imagining that the clerk or the carpenter, the costermonger or the cook, can achieve financial success by betting when men who have devoted years to "following the Turf" cannot know, and admit they cannot know, by what horse a race will be won. In an adverse review of my friend Mr. Seebohm Rowntree's "Betting and Gambling," to which I contributed a chapter, I read: "We are inclined, from long experience of racing, to believe firmly that out of every hundred

people who bet habitually ninety lose money."

"What can you know about the merits of horses you have never seen?" I ask a lad. His only ponderable answer would be, "I know nothing"; but I take the advice of experts. My daily paper is good and disinterested enough to pay a large salary to some Turf man, who gives me the result of his exceptional knowledge. I back Augur's 'stars.' I follow Captain Coe." This sounds reasonable, for in these days of specialization we are every day seeking and following the judgment of specialists. But its reasonableness vanishes entirely when one takes the trouble to compare predictions with results. This I have done over and over again, never once with a result satisfactory or complimentary to these *soi-disant* guides to knowledge, or even to the probable opinion. This method weans many from a belief that either they, or any expert, can know enough to form a basis for the hope of winning, except by the merest and most occasional chance.

I once followed for a while on paper the methods of a certain well-known Turf prophet, but found nine failures in the daily "star" before I came to one that was right, and pursuing this plan for a month found the successes would be few. So much for the chief Mahdi of the Turf!

Before me are two cuttings from daily papers which demonstrate how sporting prophets cannot agree and cannot succeed. In one there were four successes to one hundred and twenty-three failures; in the other nine to one hundred and four. Many prudential strings to their bows; but only thirteen out of two hundred and forty do not snap!

These tables appeal to the eye; but more interesting it was when, addressing audiences of working men, I read out the prophecies from the early edition and got the chairman to call out Right or Wrong in each case from the edition which gave all the winners. In another case before me I see that the experts of nineteen papers gave forty horses to win four races at Manchester, but failed in every single case. In another (Ebor Handicap, etc.), for eight races the purely sporting papers gave seventy-nine probable winners, with five successes. In another case a friend calculated for a month, following one prominent expert, and found at 2s. 6d. a time he would have lost £50. Generally, however, it is fair to say, I found it was only between seven and eight to one against any prediction of any prophet being right. What name but that of a "mug" would be given to anyone who in any other line of thought or action based belief or action on such a percentage?

Another variation is to back the mounts of the best jockeys. I have before me the results as compiled by a sporting paper. Twelve jockeys have their mounts and their wins tabulated. The percentage of wins to mounts varies from 10·14 to 28·73; but on the "£1 a mount system" in two cases the backer would have won, and in ten he would have lost, while the highest winning is £34 0s. 4d. and the greatest loss £187 7s. 4d. The two wins aggregate £57 2s. 4d., and the ten losses amount to £798 9s. 6d. Betting at large can only pay by the prevalence and the victimization of "mugs."

When I first drew attention in the Press to this subject the Duke of Portland determined to put the matter to a practical test, so he sent £7 14s. to thirteen of the sporting prophets, with the result that they sent him nineteen winners and ninety-five losers. Bad as this record was for the reputation of the prophets, their lack of knowledge was proved by the fact that four out of the thirteen were only able to guess one winner to thirty-five losers. The Duke saw the utter folly of the thing, and remarked that if he had yielded to the temptation of backing their tips he would by that time have been in the workhouse. Another noble lord asked me, as a witness before the Lords' Committee on Betting, "What harm is there in betting if I can afford it?" I said, "My lord, you can't afford it. You can't afford to give an irrational and demoralizing example to those about and beneath you. Follies in high places invariably filter down, and then their evil effects affect most injuriously the more ignorant and poor."

NO.

By "THE SPEAKER,"

The Well-known Racing Expert.

THE question as to whether betting is a mug's game is one which cannot be answered by a wave of the hand.

I have known men start off their betting career with a big winner, and have thus become fascinated with the game, but who have not been able to keep up the "form"—these racing terms will intrude—and have soon given their winnings back. This bears out the first argument which I wish to make. These backers have been *inexperienced*. As in every other walk of life, experience has to be bought and paid for, but once the novitiate stage is over and the backer has learnt to temper wisdom with sound judgment, he will say, as I do, that racing is *not* a mug's game.

One question is invariably put by those who do not see eye to eye with the betting man. "How do you account," they say, "for the fact that bookmakers go on winning year in and year out? They can only live upon what they make out of those who bet." This looks unanswerable, but the answer is not a difficult one. The money is won from the inexperienced backer, and especially from what I may call the casual racegoer. Let me give an illustration. A man is anxious for a few days' relaxation. If he is a "sporting" man the first thing he will think of is the racecourse. He is prepared to spend so much on his amusement. His bets are made indiscriminately; he picks out long shots that are probably hopeless chances—and he leaves his money on the course. This is no overdrawn picture. When one considers the number of race-meetings there are in the United Kingdom, and the vast and different populaces they appeal to, it is small matter for surprise that there are a very large number of casual racing men who are only half educated in the finer points of the Sport of Kings and democrats.

It is only fair that I should interpose with a question here. If racing is a mug's game—it is a comprehensive term and intended to damn all who bet—how is it that there are thousands of men who get a living year after year at backing horses, and a really good living, too? They are men of great experience, are sound judges of men and horses, and can weigh up "form" to an ounce, so to speak, despite its many varying phases and somewhat erratic character. Some may get information of a reliable kind, but the sheet-anchor of the successful backer is the "form" of the horses, helped by a sane and sober judgment. To men of this character racing is not a mug's game, and there are very many indeed who combine the qualities I have mentioned and whose credit balances are increased year after year by what they win from the bookmakers.

Points made by those who are opposed to betting not only often lack conviction, but they show a lack of knowledge of essential facts. I wonder how many could tell the difference between odds-on and odds-against or reckon up a betting slip? The wise man keeps a still tongue on matters he does not understand. Argument is far more telling when a speaker has an intimate knowledge of his subject. I remember some years ago a very learned gentleman connected with the Church, who may possibly come out of his retirement, taking the trouble of tabulating a statement showing the profit and loss account of all the newspaper prophets on a certain day. It looked a formidable indictment, but no schoolboy could have done it worse, for he included all non-runners as losers, and on this particular occasion there were a good many horses which did not fulfil their engagements. It is an excellent illustration of the wild statements that are often made on matters relating to racing, and if errors are made in one thing it is reasonable to suppose that a lack of knowledge will lead to mistakes in other directions. And the assertion that "betting is a mug's game" is one of those sweeping statements which are made with a rollicking recklessness which is apt to mislead the unthinking.

It is popularly supposed that bookmaking is a life of luxury and ease, but a large number are worse off than the men who bet with them. Bookmaking requires brains, and the quick "working out" of a book is no easy matter. It is the aim of all bookmakers to "bet to figures," naturally to a bit under the odds if they can. That is their percentage on the capital they have put in their books. In countries where the Pari-Mutuel is legal, the general percentage allowed to be deducted is ten per cent. That is to say, that for every hundred pounds invested backers must lose ten pounds of it. Most bookmakers, I fancy, would be glad to get one per cent. on their turnover on a year's working, and out of this they would have to pay ring and travelling fees for themselves and clerk, and wages for the latter.

It is not always possible to take a hundred and five pounds to pay out a hundred pounds over any horse. The Pari-Mutuel will take ten pounds on every "century," and this is as unalterable as the laws of the Medes and Persians. But such is the knowledge of backers nowadays that they frequently take from the layers a hundred and twenty pounds for every hundred pounds they invest. That means twenty pounds of capital gone. Some weeks when things have been running well for backers I have known the ring to lose thousands of pounds between one settling day and another.

With backers, staking is as fine an art as "betting round" is to the bookmakers, and a good system of staking will invariably beat the book. When opponents of racing wish to point a moral they adorn their tale with the old-fashioned level stake system of backing.

I will give a rough illustration of a system of staking, and estimate that an ordinary backer can pick one winner in five. Supposing they occur in this order:—

L L L L W (5 to 2) L L L W (2 to 1).

Now, on a level stake the above would show a loss of 2½ points, because there are seven losers which are reduced by the aggregate odds of 4½ to 1 against the winners. But supposing the stake is 1, 1½,

2, 2½, 3, starting at 1 again after a winner, what do we find ? Seven points are lost up to the first winner, but the three points stake placed on that wins 7½. In the second series there is a loss of 4½, but a gain of 5 over the winner at 2 to 1. The net result is a win of 1 point instead of a loss of 2½ points !

Backers regulate their stakes according to their bank, and various systems of staking are employed. After a certain number of losers that sequence is cut out and another started. Some count odds-on chances as losers, and there are other variations. Of course, there are times when long odds against chances are met with, and often two or three winners are backed in succession. I am not advocating any system of staking, but only wish to point out that there are ways and means, outside the knowledge of those who regard betting as a mug's game, of making racing pay.

To argue that betting is a mug's game because jockeys do not pay to follow on a level stake is entirely beside the question. Can any sane man expect them to ? At the most there are only seven races in a day's programme, and fields may range from five to twenty runners. No matter how many horses may be competing there is only one winning position in each race. The others must be losing ones, and the fact that the majority of jockeys must have a poor average is so obvious that the most elementary student of racing must see the foolishness of following jockeys' mounts.

The idea that backers cannot win because the bookmakers "pinch" the prices against each horse can easily be disproved. Another futile contention is that bookmakers make their own favourites. Backers are too wide-awake to stand such nonsense as that. Favourites are made by sheer weight of money, and the greater the amounts put on a horse the more his price must shorten and the others expand.

Now let us see how backers are not despoiled by the bookmakers in an unfair manner, and how the former are often given chances of taking more out of a book than they put in. Incidentally, it will give an idea how a hundred-pound book is made. I take a race at random—the first at Manchester on May 26th. The prices were 5 to 2 Novel, 3 to 1 Swift Flight, 4 to 1 Fiddle-de-Dee, 8 to 1 Rosebreeze and Sunstroke, and 20 to 1 Jasper, Messina, Orblike, and Loch Quoich. The book works out as follows :—

To Take Out.		Money Received.
100	Novel	40
99	Swift Flight	33
100	Fiddle-de-Dee	25
100	Rosebreeze	12½
100	Sunstroke	12½

We cannot put twenty pounds in for the four outsiders, as, in the majority of cases, they would not bring in a penny. Outsiders of this character usually "run for the book," but in order not to make the illustration too favourable, I will estimate that they bring in ten pounds. The book makes an interesting study. If Novel wins, the bookmaker pays out a hundred pounds and he takes ninety-three pounds wherewith to do it ! If Swift Flight wins he takes a hundred and pays out ninety-nine. Fiddle-de-Dee suits him better, for he takes one hundred and eight pounds, and this horse was the winner of the race. A bigger profit is shown if either of the 8 to 1 chances wins, but the bookmaker's chances of winning are proportionately smaller. If the bookmaker has not written the names of the four outsiders in his book (and it is an odds-on chance that he has not), the three favourites are his biggest liabilities, and he loses if either proves successful.

So much for the belief held in some quarters that "betting is a mug's game." There may be "mugs" betting, but I will venture the statement that there is more money lost by "mugs" who dabble in stocks and shares than there is at racing.

WITCH OF

By Stella

ILLUSTRATED BY

I.

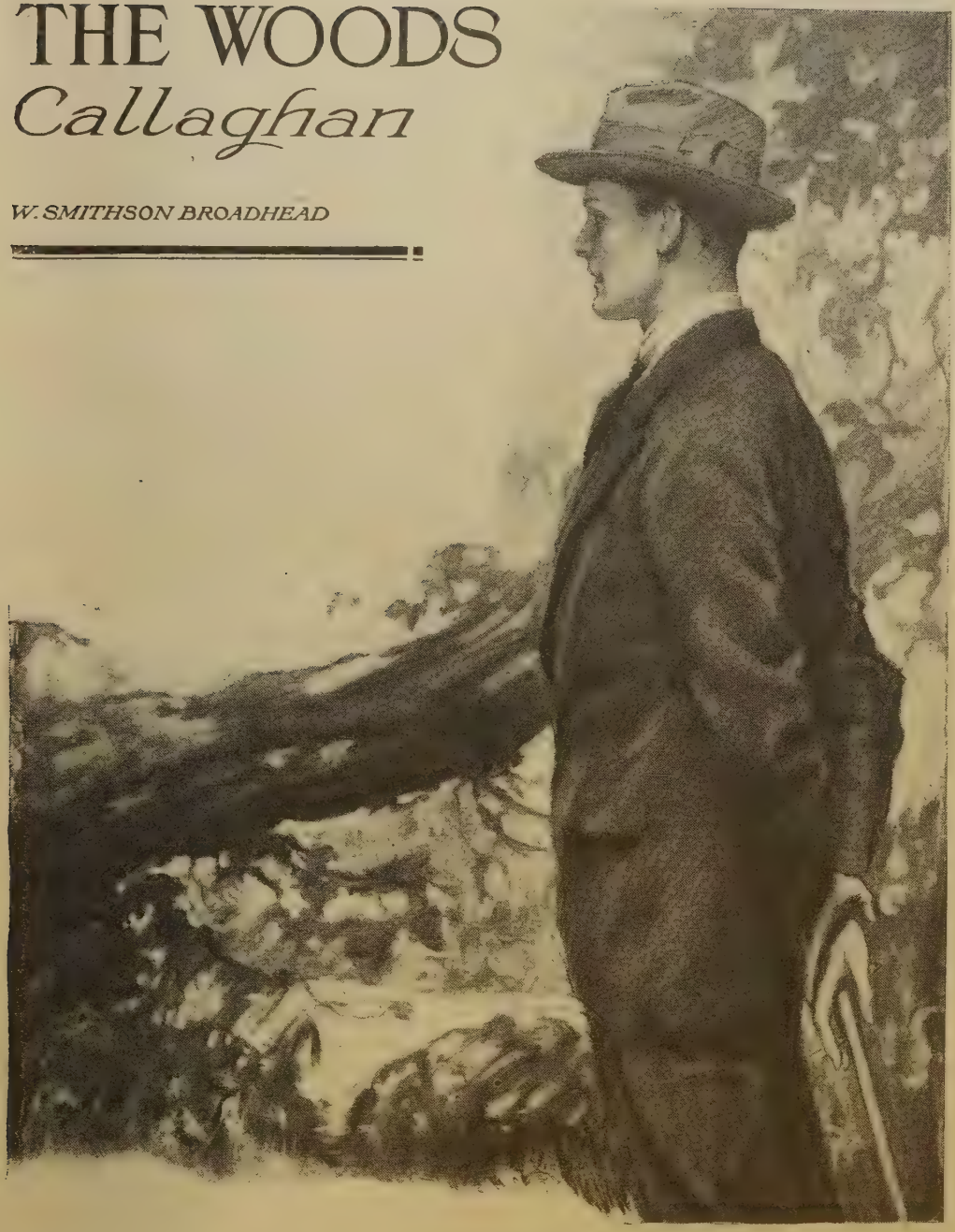
DEEP into the greenwoods, all on a summer's day, wandered a comely young man, whistling as he went.

He was feeling exceedingly pleased with life for no particular reason except that he was young, fit, was on a holiday, and was spending it the way he liked best. And his particular way was just to make no plans, but to wander off wherever the spirit led him, and he knew by experience that it usually led him into pleasant places, and gave him something of adventure by the way.

Just now he was following the erratic course of a jolly little stream that wound in

THE WOODS
Callaghan

W. SMITHSON BROADHEAD



and out and round about and twisted and turned and tumbled, till for all you knew it might have turned you widdershins and you back at the place of your starting. So, not knowing in the least where he was, nor why, nor exactly when (for the trees overhead shut to and discreetly hid the sun), he wandered on deep into the green shadows, and let happen what would.

Then, all of a sudden, with a turn of that intriguing little stream, he came upon a most entrancingly beautiful girl with a large broom, industriously sweeping a path through what appeared to be the depths of the woods.

"What on earth are you doing?" he exclaimed, involuntarily, almost before he knew he had spoken, as it were.

"Keeping the wolf from the door," she replied, coolly.

"But, good heavens!" he said, in alarm, "you don't mean to tell me there are wolves here, in these wonderful but usually respectable Sussex woods?"

"Young man," she answered, and all this time she had scarcely so much as glanced at him, but kept busily on with her sweeping, "there are wolves lurking behind every tree in the woods, and round the corners of most streets, too."

"You amaze me," he rejoined, seriously.

"Not only wolves, but witches too," she went on.

"*That* I can more readily understand."

"You are pleased to be obvious, sir," she remarked, giving a particularly firm sweep to a stray bunch of leaves.

"True. I apologize—but what with the broom and all," he murmured, vaguely.

"And yet," she said, pausing suddenly to lean on her broom and gaze at him with a deep seriousness, "you are nearer the truth than you know." And therewith she fell to sweeping again vigorously.

"It pleases you to be cryptic, madam," he said, at last, when he had recovered from the effect of that full gaze (did I say she was tall and exceedingly beautiful?).

"Your whole appearance is cryptic," she answered.

He glanced apprehensively about his person.

"Cryptic, no—eccentric, possibly—comfortable, certainly," he asserted.

"I was not referring to your personal appearance," she said, coldly, though she had the glimmerings of a faint pink blush, which showed at least that she was human. "I meant your appearance in these woods."

"Ah, you probably have me there! I am physically incapable of seeing those silly little notices about 'Dogs *will* be, and Rubbish must *not* be, shot here,' and all that. And if I do see them, I never know which I really am."

The Dianaesque (did I say she was more like Diana than Aphrodite?) mouth twitched a little, but she continued her sweeping assiduously.

"Again you mistake my meaning. I was in reality referring to the fact that you are the first stranger to pass by this place for a fortnight."

"It was indeed high time I came," he murmured, complacently.

"That is as it may be," she remarked, and therewith her sweeping was done, she having cleared among the leaves a little path that led down to the stream and upwards steeply through the trees, whither he could not see.

She surveyed her work with evident approval, and then, hoisting her broom calmly under her arm, started with an easy swinging walk up through the trees.

It was obvious that the incident could not end there. It was ridiculous. It was absurd. It was unthinkable.

Quick action is necessary to him who sports with the gods. The young man stepped forward with incomparable grace and laid a hand upon the broom—indeed, before she could resist he had taken it from her.

"Excuse me," he murmured; "I think I see a twig—a mere nothing—but still a twig."

And therewith set to with the broom on the path again.

NOW, if you have never tried to use one of those detestable things, a garden-broom—besom, I understand it is called—you will not appreciate his courage. For the wretched thing is no broom at all, but a mere collection of unwieldy limp sticks tied round a knotty and unpleasant handle, and most difficult of manipulation. In fact, it is a weapon rather for a witch than for a mortal.

He failed dismally, and yet with a certain grace, she watching his efforts, calm and unmoved. He desisted, but kept command of the broom.

"Before this pleasant interview comes to an end—if it ever *must* end—I personally see no reason why it ever should—I should be really grateful if you would elucidate two points that have occurred in our deeply interesting conversation—*re* wolves and *re* witches—also, as arising out of, but subsidiary to the said points—wherefore this path? Which, of course, brings us back to the exact point at which our intercourse started."

"Your request is courteous, young man, and not unreasonable."

"I'm glad you look upon it like that. Might I suggest a seat?" He airily indicated the roots of a great beech tree.

She sank on to it, and then curled her feet in some inscrutable way round a projecting root. He placed the broom with precision about four feet from her and sat upon it. It occurred to him that retention of that broom might be an essential part of the game.

"I would not venture to question one so obviously strayed from Olympus," he said presently, feeling that the silence, perfect as it was, was being wasted, "and yet—wolves—witches—brooms—a swept path here in these Sussex woods—no, I confess it is beyond me."

"It is certainly amazing," she murmured, dreamily, "and yet——" She lapsed into silence again.

"The wolves, I take it," he began, encouragingly, "are metaphorical?"

She nodded slowly.

"Yet that surprises me."

You understand, she looked expensive, from her neat, brogue-shod feet, her sports silk hose, her perfectly-cut tweed skirt, and wonderfully-woven silk sweater. She was Diana turned out for a day in the country from Bond Street.

"It may." She passed it over lightly and dismissed it with a little wave of her hand.

"Witches?"

"In the plural, no—but—lean forward, young man, and see, if you can, where this path leads."

He did so—and behold the path led up through the trees to a little open glade, and there he could just see the indication of a small cottage with a chimney-stack sticking out on top, for all the world like the cottage where as children we *knew* the witch lived in the wood.

"In there?" he questioned, breathlessly.

She nodded gravely.

"From six in the evening to ten in the morning," she answered. "And from circumstances over which I have but little control, I am her handmaid. Hence this path, which she desired me to sweep that she might pass easily to the stream. For it is necessary when she returns from her nefarious business about the world that she cleanse herself in the stream every evening"

"I understand."

"You do not, young man—but I would further enlighten you—if you would do me service."

At that his eagerness leapt from his heart into his eyes, and even to his feet, for he sprang up and knelt gracefully before her.

Before answering, before so much as glancing at all this eagerness, she stretched out her hand and calmly appropriated the broom which he had thus vacated. He cursed himself inwardly for not having retained his presence of mind and therewith that confounded implement.

"Tell me," she said, graciously, leaning a little towards him, with another of those direct glances which so disturbed his poise, "are you a plumber?"

And at that, for the first time in this intriguing encounter, the young man (his name, by the way, being Richard Bellamy) was slightly disconcerted. He glanced agitatedly at his thumb-nails, but there was nothing wrong there. Then inspiration returned.

"As far as my humble capacity allows," he said, "I have made some slight study of plumbing—such things as the hearts of men and women—motives, actions, etc. If I can be of any use——"

"What I require plumbing," she said, coldly, "is a well."

"Ah!" he rejoined, brightly, "the same old well—with the same old inhabitant at the bottom of it?"

She rose, rather majestically.

"You are wrong—it is a perfectly ordinary well—and it is the bucket that is at the bottom of it."

He also rose gravely.

"Lead me," he said, "to this perfectly ordinary well and recalcitrant bucket. They shall be brought to order."

"Oh!" said Diana (for such indeed was her perfectly fitting name), "can you, will you, really?"

And at that quite human, breathless little outburst he felt, man-like, that he had the advantage, and secretly gloried therein. Also, as they went up the steep little hill in those deep greenwoods he possessed himself quietly and courteously of the broom again.

"Yes," she murmured, dreamily, "you may take it. It is, alas! no use to *me*."

"It is, then, hers?"

"From six in the evening till ten in the morning—yes."

He handled it gingerly.

"With such things, then," he said, reverently, "is all the magic of the world and the greenwoods wrought."

"It may be."

"It is," he said, and looked at her.

But she would not look at him, only perhaps the steep climb up the little path had made her cheeks a slightly deeper pink.

AND herewith they came to the open space, which held the most entrancing witch's cottage you ever saw. It had a door in the middle with a porch, a window on each side, a little pointed roof with a chimney sticking out at the top. And all round it was a tiny garden wrested from the woodland, and in the garden was the well. It was just the sort of well that would be supplied with a toy box of a model village. Richard felt that he could not be frightened of it.

He peered cautiously over the side. The water therein was very low and clear, and at the bottom of it he could see the bucket lying helpless and forlorn on its side. In the air dangled the broken rope.

"Um!—ah!" he said; "it is, I think, a mere matter of a hook."

"Quite so," said the girl, and immediately produced from where it was lying by the side of the well one of those great hooks you see in the beams of cottages. I think they must be for hanging up hams.

"Magic again," murmured Richard. "I said hook; there is hook at once."

"I have been endeavouring to tie the wretched thing on to the rope for three days," said she, in a voice of quiet tragedy.

"Ah!" said he, beginning to get busy with the dangling end, "and meanwhile?"

"I've had to fetch every drop of water from the stream."

"This will be the best day's angling I've had for many years. I am grateful to you."

"When you've landed the bucket," she said, pointedly, "the gratitude will be mine."

"You challenge me?"

"I will do more. I offer a reward."

He looked at her seriously.

"There is but one reward I would wish, and that is a very high one."

"Name it, sir," she said, coolly.

"The witch, I think you said, is off duty from six in the evening to ten in the morning?"

She assented.

"Then if I should be successful in reclaiming the bucket, I would claim the honour of your company from ten in the morning to six in the evening."

She looked contemplative.

"Life," she said at last, "without a bucket has been curiously unpleasant—almost unendurable—and yet——"

"I will not enforce the reward," he said, quickly. "Time enough when I have caught my fish."

He had his hook knotted well by now and proceeded to unwind the creaking rope. It dangled at last tantalizingly a foot above the water.

"Damn," he said, very softly.

"Quite so," she agreed. "There is three feet of rope on to the bucket end."

"There would be. Well, there's nothing for it," and he proceeded to take off his coat.

"Are you going down?" she said, rather breathlessly.

"Madam," he replied, "there is a bucket to be fetched which is of value to you; also there are footholds and rope to steady oneself. I have done stranger things than this."

"Where?" she asked.

"In Gallipoli," he replied, and without more ado, and a little smile that was meant to be a brave farewell, he was over the parapet of the well and cautiously feeling for the next foothold. It was a matter of half an hour before he had that hook firmly into the bucket, and meanwhile strange things had been happening to the Olympian girl who watched him breathlessly from above. When at last his head and shoulders appeared again over the parapet she gave him both her hands to help him finally to firm ground. He held them quite a minute longer than was necessary.

Then between them they reeled the rope in, standing opposite each other to give more purchase on the pulling, their hands touching on the rusty iron handle. Thus does Man occasionally, by reverting to the Cave Age, gain his ascendancy over Woman—no woman could face cheerfully the green slime and possible frog-things that inhabit a deep well.

As the bucket creaked, wobbled, and spluttered to the top of the parapet, slopping its cool contents over the side, she gave him one of those direct looks, from which now all coldness had vanished, and momentarily an amazing softness and gratitude filled its place. But by the time all this had been done the sun was westering, and when Richard had again partially recovered from the effect of that long direct look, he had the sense and sufficient caution left to look at his watch. It was ten minutes to six.

"I must away, madam, ere a deeper spell and one more harmful be put upon me."

"She is a punctual person," agreed the girl, with the quiver of a smile.

"But to-morrow?" he said, tentatively and very delicately.

"If you claim your reward."

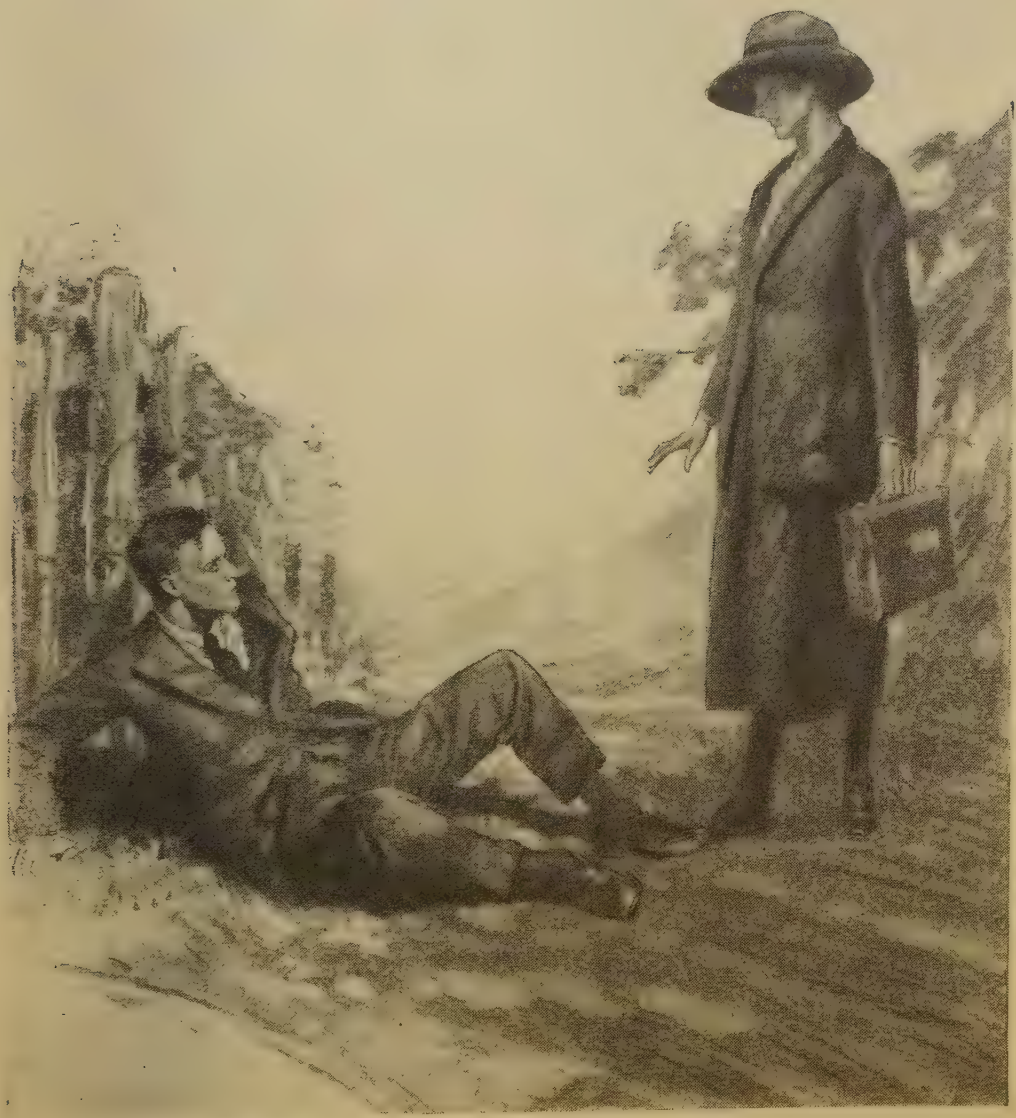
"I claim nothing, madam. But that rope is a makeshift affair, and may give again at any moment. I would like to make a job of it. I would bring fresh rope."

"Come, then," she said, "if it please you," and therewith turned away into the little cottage, and only looked back when he was far down the path towards the stream.

II.

NOW, having got so far on with so promising an adventure in the green-woods of Sussex, it would be a poor and unworthy reader who could not fill in the next few days for himself. Granted the weather held—which it did—one has but to imagine these two in a delightful if elusive companionship from ten in the morning, or say ten-thirty—for Master Richard Bellamy had caution in him on his mother's side—till five-thirty in the evening—a companionship of which the elusiveness was as attractive as the intimacy, for with all her charm, her unconventionality, her Olympian poise (or did I say pose?—no, I don't think so) with its occasional lapses into the entirely human and youthful, Diana of the woodlands gave him no clue as to herself other than her personality. That is to say, that at the end of three days he knew nothing further of who she was nor whence she came, nor why she lived with a witch in a cottage hidden in the heart of the woods and toiled most of the day with somewhat inexperienced hands to make it neat and clean and prepare meals and do all those thousand and one things that even so tiny a cottage demands.

"Why do it?" asked Richard once, as he solemnly chopped up faggot-wood for



"He awoke soon after 6 p.m. to find looking down on him with an inscrutable expression a small, energetic, middle-aged woman."

the tiny kitchen fire. "Cannot She, with a whisk of her broom, so to speak, set all this straight, and with a clap of the hands bring dainty food, ready cooked, to the table? There should be plenty of firing in that place to which She most probably belongs."

"You do not understand. This is a part of the penalty I must pay—or——"

"Or?" he questioned, gently.

"Or go back whence I came," she answered, and turned away to set the table for supper.

But the lunches were delicious, for day by day they were taken out into the green-woods, down by the stream or under the great beeches, and he taught her how to tickle for trout in the pool where the stream grew wider and deeper and the water swung in little eddies about the rocks. They were poaching, he guessed, but that concerned neither him nor her, and no one ever passed that way to disturb the delicious peace of their days.

Of course, he was in love with her. I think he had been from the moment that he held both her hands on emerging from the well. He thinks it was from before

that even. Of course, he showed it. And yet——

Was he missing his opportunities ?

That was the question that worried him at the end of each wonderful day, as half in a dream he went back to his village inn, five miles away. Never had diffidence taken him in this way before ; he grew hot to think how little diffidence ever had taken him, and cold at the thought that now, when for the first time it mattered vitally, perhaps this very diffidence would be his undoing.

Supposing the weather broke ?

Supposing the witch elected to remain at home ?

Supposing Diana, the wonderful goddess herself, vanished ?

It was just that, on the sixth day, that actually happened.

He strode through the woods, determined that, come about how it may, something should be done, said, indicated.

And then she was not there.

The cottage was locked up, no smoke came from the chimney. He went round to the back, a sick feeling in his heart, and no one was chopping wood or wringing out cloths. The cottage was impenetrable, calm, secret. Frantically he searched the porch, the window-sills, the garden gate, the well, for a message, a note, some word of explanation, and there was none.

He tried to look in at the windows, but the little casement blinds were discreetly drawn. He knocked, thinking she might be inside and ill, or asleep, or have fainted. Lurid possibilities dawned on his mind and drove him frantic.

He went on knocking.

There was no response.

The noise of his knocking sounded strange and incongruous in the heart of the still greenwoods. The cottage mocked him. It was suddenly as if it never had been inhabited, as if the whole thing had been a dream. The cottage, the woods, the golden sun, the green shadows, all mocked him. Then climbing with infinite dexterity on to the water-butt at the back, he managed to wriggle along and look into the tiny larder through the skylight.

There on the shelf he saw a large ham, uncut. With relief that was almost painful, he slid back to earth, and taking out his handkerchief, mopped his forehead. He had been through a good deal in a few minutes.

For where there is a large uncut ham, there will eventually people—or a person—come to eat it.

" Where there's ham there's hope," he murmured. desperately, and took up a firm position on the ground with his back to the garden-gate. He was prepared to wait there until such time as the owner of the ham returned, be it Diana, or the Witch, or the Bailiffs—he remembered her vague allusions to the wolves at the door.

He had with him some fruit and little fresh-baked rolls from the inn—his contribution to what should have been that delicious alfresco lunch *à deux*. With such, a man in love can make a passable meal, helped down by a flask. He was prepared valiantly to stick it throughout the day and night if necessary. Most of the day he cursed. He cursed himself up hill and down dale for—he was not quite sure for what—for loving her—for letting her vanish—for not having foreseen that she would vanish—for——

And then he fell asleep—flat on his back, his soft hat over his eyes, and his body firmly blocking the way through the garden-gate.

HE awoke soon after 6 p.m. to find looking down on him with an inscrutable expression a small, upright, energetic, middle-aged woman, with beady black eyes and a thin, pointed nose. The witch—in a well-cut serviceable tweed suit and a felt hat and carrying an attaché-case—but still most undoubtedly and incontestably the witch.

He sprang to his feet apologizing, for Master Richard Bellamy's manners never deserted him, however his presence of mind behaved, and tried to take off his hat, only to find it rolling at his feet. He smoothed back his hair instead, and retained his position with his back to the gate. Then he saw a sudden twinkle in the witch's beady black eye—he was quick to notice such things and take advantage of them.

" Lady," he began, simply, " knowing you to be what you are, I need not explain myself. I only ask you—where is she ? "

She ignored his question and merely adjusted some glasses on her pointed nose in order to observe him better.

" May I ask how long you have been here, Mr. Richard Bellamy ? "

" Since 10.15 a.m.," he replied, looking at his watch.

" And what have you had to eat ? "

He indicated the pile of spent strawberry stalks and a few crumbs of roll.

" I couldn't get at the ham," he said, sadly.

" The ham ? " she said, sharply, wheeling round to him.

" Only by the presence of the ham in your larder—indicating the true being of the cottage—was my reason saved. Otherwise I should have known it was all a dream—a dream from which I should never have awakened."

" Come and have some," said the witch, abruptly.

" Lady, you are unspeakably kind," said he, throwing open the garden-gate and stepping aside, with a bow.

"Incidentally, I wish to get into my cottage," muttered the witch.

"You have me there," laughed Richard, "but I am prepared to risk everything, for you are the only being who can tell me where she is."

"I can't tell you. I don't know myself—but I should have been disappointed in you if you hadn't waited here to-day."

"You don't *know*?"

"No, I don't—but I suspect she is not far off. She left me in the middle of the night—or something near it—but, bless her, she'd put my breakfast ready before she left."

"She would," murmured Richard, enthusiastically.

"The mice got at it, but still—she meant well," said the witch, removing her felt hat and jamming it into a chair. "And now, first supper, and then business."

"It is a strange thing," said Richard, as he helped her in with the ham, "that however worn with anxiety one is, however deeply one is feeling, the feeling of hunger goes a little deeper still."

The ham cut excellently. Some stout that the witch produced by magic went well with it. Richard felt that Diana was coming nearer to him.

"And now, Mr. Richard Bellamy," said the witch, as they cleared away, "what do you know about Diana?"

"She is the goddess of the moon and the stars and the woods and——"

"Oh, cut all that—it's in mythological dictionaries, and if you're going on to poetry, Keats has done it better. What do you really know?"

"Nothing—not even her surname—except that she is the only girl that has ever existed for me."

"How many times have you said that?"

Richard counted on his fingers, thoughtfully.

"Five times altogether—but——" Then he suddenly broke down on it. "Oh, let's cut it all, Witch, because I'm in deadly earnest and I was such an infernal fool all these days that I never said anything and I don't know even whether she—well, there it is—and now I've lost her, like an idiot. What is she?"

And then, because the truth was looking out of his eyes, and the witch knew as much about men and women as most people, and also knew all about Mr. Richard Bellamy in particular, she patted him gently into a chair and placed cigarettes and matches before him.

"DIANA is Diana Melford," she said, "only niece of my cousin, who owns these woods and everything else about here. She hasn't a penny of her own, and the old fool wants to make her his heir, instead of only giving her an allowance. But she's got highfalutin' ideas about marriage—she's very young, you know—and directly this was known—about the heirship, I mean, not the ideas—she declares that she is pestered by wretched men night and day, wanting to marry her and the Melford estates together. And she won't have any of them—doesn't like the type, she says—so she up and quarrels with her uncle over it, won't go near the place, won't be made an heiress, and in the last extremity won't even take the allowance, starts out to earn her own living as a mannequin in one of these blessed society shops run by Lady Someone or other, finds herself in more bother than ever with men—she happens to be very beautiful, you see——"

"I know," muttered Richard.

"And finally comes running to me to look after her. So, as I live in this cottage through the summer and go up to town every day, I popped her in here as my maid-of-all-work—these woods are private, you know, and you're trespassing—to see how she liked really earning her living, until she comes to her senses and learns how to discriminate between men. I give her ten shillings a week, all found. That's what Diana is."

There was a long silence in the little cottage, while Richard smoked the witch's cigarettes and looked out of the little casement window into the greenwood.

"This is where I come in," he said at last, quietly. "As you know my surname—which Diana doesn't——"

"Diana does. I told her last night."

"How did you know? But, of course——"

"Young man, do you suppose I'd let my maid-of-all-work go gallivanting in the woods with a young man whose name I didn't know?"

"I give it up. Of course, I do live in an inn—still, as I didn't give my own name there—being on holiday—so to speak——"

The witch tapped her attaché-case.

"You forget my stock-in-trade."

"You're a witch, of course, I know that—but I don't know what your specialized form is—if you could only bring Diana back, or find her for me—I won't press about my name."

"Anyway," the witch said, abruptly, "the name of Richard Bellamy figures largely on the list of a certain great hospital of which I happen to be almoner—and I have a distinct recollection of a certain somewhat embarrassed and pink-faced young man who came before the Board with a proposal and a cheque which set the hospital on its legs, and——"

"Oh, lor'!" said Richard Bellamy. "That

stuff!" He was really crimson and embarrassed for the first time in the whole of his adventure.

"So when I saw you——"

"When did you see me?"

"Coming up out of the well. Your watch was slow that day, or my train early."

"The *dénouement* is complete. I'm at your mercy. But why tell Diana?"

"That you are one of the richest men in England? Well, I didn't know it would send her flying away in the middle of the night, I admit—but otherwise——"

"But where has she gone? You must know."

"I told you I don't know—but I expect she went flying back to her uncle on the broomstick—to marry the first young man without any money who'll ask her."

Richard rose.

"Where's uncle?" was all he said.

The witch laughed.

"Do you want to marry her yourself?"

"Haven't I been telling you so for the last hour?"

"True, of course you have. But have patience. Uncles hate being disturbed at dinner—besides——"

Suddenly a low sweet whistling call came out of the woods, through the stillness of the twilight.

"I thought so—Diana would be sure to come back—it's Friday night and I haven't paid her wages—also she never could stand uncle for more than a day—and she'll think you've gone by now."

The sweet low whistle came again.

Richard went determinedly to the door.

"Bless you, Witch!" was all he said.

The witch chuckled as he strode down her garden path and through the gate.

"Quite cleverly stage-managed, I think," she said, as she cut a few thin slices of the ham, and put the rest away deliberately in the larder.

HE met Diana just on the spot where first he had seen her sweeping the path through the woods. For a moment she stood quite still, in that way of hers, as though she hardly saw him. Then she came slowly and pleasantly forward, very self-possessed and cool.

"Good evening, Richard. Might I ask what you are doing here so late?"

"Nonsense!" said he, for he felt that it was now or never. "Why did you run away?"

"I fail to understand," she said, Dianaesque as ever. "I was engaged to——"

"Diana," he cried, in a fever all of a sudden, "don't tell me you've done it already! You can't, you know. You haven't given the witch her month's notice."

"What on earth might you be talking about?" she said, coolly.

"Your engagement. It's preposterous, you know it is. I won't allow it—I——"

For the first time he went completely off his balance, but, what with the woods and the stillness of the evening and the divine nearness of this perfect girl, one might expect it.

She gave him suddenly another of those direct long looks—but this time, suddenly, her eyes fell. There was something so much more potent in his.

"I—I want my supper," she murmured, and tried to move on up the little path. But he seized both her hands.

"You can't. Tell me it isn't true. You haven't gone and got engaged to a blighter who is just after your money?"

"I haven't got any money. I was going to say that I was engaged to dine with my uncle."

"Thank God!" He regained his balance suddenly. "Have you quarrelled with uncle, again?"

"Yes," she said, wearily. "You have, I gather, been talking to the witch?"

"For hours and hours," he said. "Ever since ten o'clock this morning—no, I mean six o'clock to-night—but anyway I've been waiting for you, nearly off my head, and I—well, let's sit down and talk about it."

He still had her hands, and almost absent-mindedly she forgot to withdraw them. So unresistingly she sat on the gnarled root of the same tree, but this time he sat much closer, and there was no intervening broom-stick.

Presently he put his disengaged hand in his pocket and brought out two shillings, a sixpence, and twopence-halfpenny, and laid them at her feet.

"Diana—will you marry me?" he said, very softly. "I think I have enough to keep the wolf from the door, without any uncles and heirships or anything."

"I know," she said; "that's why——"

"You ran away? You are very illogical."

"Well, I thought I would rather marry someone who just wanted my money—than—than——"

"Say it."

"I will not. Than have people think *I* ran after anyone for his."

"You are still illogical, for you have come back—and, woman-like, you haven't answered my question."

"I want my supper," but the cool voice was distinctly tremulous.

"*Will* you marry me?"

"Not before supper."

"No, no—the ham is perfectly delicious—but afterwards—any time—this year—next year—some time."

"Not never, I think," she just said.

"Diana—will you marry me?' he said, very softly. 'I think I have enough to keep the wolf from the door.'"

The deep shadows of the wood drew round them and night fell unheeded.

In the cottage above the witch lit her lamp, and then philosophically, and still chuckling to herself, ate the thin slices of ham that she had cut for Diana.

IF THE EYE WERE A TELESCOPE

We should enter a world of terrifying splendour at sunset

By *Latimer J. Wilson*

IF the human eye should suddenly acquire the power of a telescope, so that people could see everything magnified hundreds of times, what a strange sunset would end the day! As the dusk turned into the darkness of night a pale light would flood the cerulescent sky, and the most remarkable of sights would be witnessed. Crowds would gather wherever an open view of the horizon could be obtained. Beyond the sky-line would come a gigantic disc, so strange and mysterious that at first no one would recognize it as the moon.

Stupendous and terrifying, yet majestic in the lights and shadows of the weird scenery, is the moon. If people could see the earth's satellite with the naked eye as even a moderate-sized telescope shows it, the strange beauty of Astarte would arouse mankind to its highest pitch of excitement, and every hill-top would swarm with people who had come to witness the moon rise.

Magnified a hundred or more diameters, the moon would fill the sky with its mountain-pinnacles and crater-walls hanging threateningly downward toward the earth. Men would distrust the power of gravity to hold such a mass of heavy material above their heads. The features of the familiar "moon man" would be transformed into arid plains pitted with black holes. Curious serpentine valleys, filled with shadows or brilliantly

flashing the fire of sunshine; phantom peaks of mountains protruding from pits of bottomless night; crater-floors marked with fantastic shadows—the eye, as a telescope would disclose all these when we looked at the gibbous or the half of the crescent moon!

One normally thinks of the rising moon as a disc that is much smaller than a man of average height. But if a man should be seen projected against the disc of the moon when he stands a mile from the observer, he would appear only about one-tenth of the diameter of the lunar disc, and he would be scarcely visible to the naked eye—unless it possessed the power of a telescope. If he stood closer he would be proportionately larger, and if he were farther away he would be vastly smaller, in proportion to the huge hemisphere of the earth's satellite. To see the wonders of the heavens and to include the familiar features of the landscape, the observer would have to occupy a position that commanded a perfectly clear view. Otherwise near-by objects would intrude their magnified size upon the scene.

Having witnessed the moon rise and pass serenely across the heavens, the crowds would now behold a spectacle more fantastic than imagination has ever conceived. Everyone could now see the splendour of Saturn, the ring-bound planet which before had been visible merely as a point of light shining steadily among the twinkling stars. This most beautiful of worlds comes into the sky in all the majesty of glittering moons and rings, scintillant in the light of the far-away sun. Says Omar:—

> From Earth's centre through the Seventh Gate
> I rose, and on the Throne of Saturn sate.

Yet the author of the "Rubáiyát" never saw the ring of Saturn as the telescope reveals it;

It Vanishes as You Draw Near.

At a distance of nearly eight hundred million miles from the earth, the planet is a conspicuous object softly shining in the darkness of the night. But if one could approach close enough, Saturn would almost vanish, because its surface—so greatly magnified and spread over so great an area of the sky—would be far less bright to one's eyes than when seen with its light concentrated upon a smaller area.

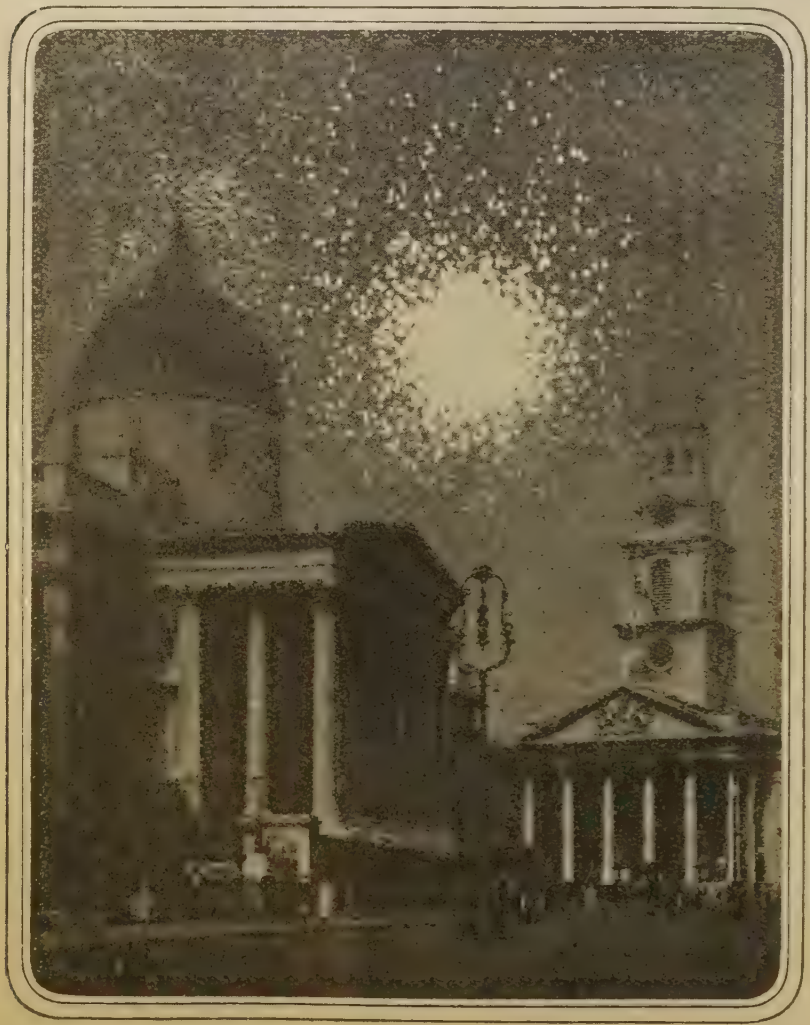
Rings of dust and meteorites surround the globe of Saturn. To see them without a telescope would be one of the greatest sights permitted the eye of man.

Saturn's ring is composed of small isolated bodies, each separately too insignificant to be individually seen from the earth. Meteoric dust-clouds, they circle swiftly around the equatorial girth of the planet. The bodies are evidently more scattered in that portion of the ring closest to the ball of Saturn, and also in the outer rim of the ring, while a broad black gap occurs within the ring itself in which there are no visible reflecting bodies.

If one could approach very close to the great race-course of the ring, the little masses circling around it would be seen as mere dots of light, and the effect of the beautiful ring would utterly be spoiled. There are evidently vast clouds of tenuous dust, scarcely as dense as the haze of spring, which sweep back and forth across the rings as the forces of gravity and light-pressure operate. The moons of Saturn cause "tides" in the ring-particles and dust-clouds, producing what might be called gravitational waves, grinding together the denser masses, and passing in undulating motion throughout the plane of the ring.

Stars that Swarm by Thousands.

In certain parts of the heavens can be seen, on a dark, clear night, a mere hazy patch of luminosity, too faint to attract attention. If the eye were a telescope a marvellous transformation would occur when the observer glanced at one of these spots. Instead of the insignificant wisp of light, scarcely visible, would be seen a magnificent globular cluster of stars!



The magnificent cluster of stars in Hercules, which appears merely as a speck of light, but which to the eye of telescopic power would resemble a bursting rocket. Suns of many colours are in this swarm.

Hidden in the vast distance of space, these curious balls of suns are to be found. Literally thousands of stars are congregated in these mysterious swarms, and many of the individual members are variable in their light. They become alternately bright or faint in the course of only a few hours, flashing like lazy fireflies in a summer night. If the eye possessed the power to disclose these amazingly beautiful objects, and people could see them associated with the landscape near the horizon, men would crowd every hill to witness the scene. A count of the exceedingly faint members of the sun-swarm might raise the total number in some

From three to five times larger than the normal disc of the full moon, Mars, with its gleaming snow-caps, would be astounding if we could see it like this with the naked eye.

of these clusters to fifty thousand stars, the brightest streaming from the centre in curious spiral arms. It is estimated that the light of one of these clusters is at least thirty-seven thousand years, travelling one hundred and eighty-six thousand miles a second, on its way earthward.

Like Rockets Bursting in Air.

Magnified a hundred or more times, the globular cluster becomes a truly impressive spectacle. Associated with the familiar landmarks on the distant horizon, and magnified many times, the great star-ball, which actually occupies an area in the sky scarcely one-sixteenth of the apparent space occupied by the full moon, would drop below the horizon like the myriad sparks from a huge bursting rocket, astounding the spectators by its magnificence. "Can that mere speck of wispy light be that which I now behold?" would ask the spectator, comparing this telescopic object with its normal naked-eye view.

Turning toward another point of the horizon, a ball of light, a bright disc three or five times larger than the normal apparent size of the familiar fair lunar orb, could be seen. Shining like a star of dazzling beauty would be a curious white spot attached to the edge of the disc. It is the distinguishing feature of the most-talked-of planet, the earth's older neighbour in space, Mars. The white spot marks the polar snow of the planet.

With the passage of time men would become so accustomed to what the telescopic power of their vision disclosed that they would no doubt cease to marvel at what they saw. The magnified grandeur of the universe would become commonplace, but there would remain a wide and undiminished interest in the ever-changing phenomena of Mars. The snow-caps, melting in the sunshine of the Martian summer, or forming in whiteness during the winter, would ever attract attention. The delicate tints flashing like an opal in the sunlight, the sweep of seasons showing across the vast gap of millions of miles, would always make Mars a subject for newspaper publicity.

How the eye of telescopic power would see the gigantic sun. It would be too dazzling to view without a shade-glass. The observer's distance from the bridge would make it small enough to be included in the scene.

Enjoying the Martian Scenery.

If, without a telescope, observers could look at Mars and see its yellow deserts, its areas of blue-green forests and fields, its drifting clouds, and its regions of frost, if they could watch the strange shapes of the planet's markings as rotation brings them across the disc, the spectators would find such fascination in the views that people would speculate upon how to discover a means of finding out what manner of life prevailed there. The growth and decay of the remarkable streaks called "canals," thought to be projects of engineering skill producing an abundance of vegetation by irrigating the desert regions of Mars, would be a fertile subject for newspaper controversy.

Bridges of Flame at Sunset.

How strange would be the sunset! The enlarged sun, extended over a greater portion of the sky, would be less bright, area for area, than when concentrated in a smaller disc. But one would still have to use a shade-glass to look directly at it. Sun-spots, which are sometimes visible to the unaided eye, now could be seen as great fantastic shapes of darkness strung across the sun's bright disc.

Legend gives the buffalo's eye the power of magnification. But if the human eye took on the power of even a small telescope, to include landmarks such as the Tower Bridge in the field of view, the observer would have to stand many miles away. Otherwise the bridge itself would eclipse the setting sun.

Man would view the sun, the moon, the star-clusters, and the planets magnified one hundred, four hundred, or one thousand times their naked-eye size. A new heaven and a new earth would be created for human sight.

ANOTHER "ARCHIE" STORY.

Washy makes his presence felt

by

P. G. WODEHOUSE

ILLUSTRATED BY
A. WALLIS MILLS

THE lobby of the Cosmopolis Hotel was a favourite stamping-ground of Mr. Daniel Brewster, its proprietor. He liked to wander about there, keeping a paternal eye on things, rather in the manner of the Jolly Inn-Keeper (hereinafter to be referred to as Mine Host) of the old-fashioned novel. Customers who, hurrying in to dinner, tripped over Mr. Brewster, were apt to mistake him for the hotel detective—for his eye was keen and his aspect a trifle austere—but nevertheless he was being as jolly an inn-keeper as he knew how. His presence in the lobby supplied a personal touch to the Cosmopolis which other New York hotels lacked, and it undeniably made the girl at the book-stall extraordinarily civil to her clients, which was all to the good.

Most of the time Mr. Brewster stood in one spot and just looked thoughtful; but now and again he would wander to the marble slab behind which he kept the desk-clerk and run his eye over the register, to see who had booked rooms—like a child examining the stocking on Christmas morning to ascertain what Santa Claus had brought him.

As a rule, Mr. Brewster concluded this performance by shoving the book back across the marble slab and resuming his meditations. But one night in the early spring he varied this procedure by starting rather violently, turning purple, and uttering an exclamation which was manifestly an exclamation of chagrin. He turned abruptly and cannoned into his son-in-law, Archie Moffam, who, in company with Lucille, his wife, happened to be crossing the lobby at the moment on his way to dine in their suite.

Mr. Brewster apologized gruffly; then, recognizing his victim, seemed to regret having done so.

"Oh, it's you! Why can't you look where you're going?" he demanded. He had suffered much from his son-in-law.

"Frightfully sorry," said Archie, amiably. "Never thought you were going to fox-trot backwards all over the fairway."

"You mustn't bully, Archie," said Lucille, severely, attaching herself to her father's back hair and giving it a punitive tug, "because he's an angel, and I love him, and you must learn to love him, too."

"Give you lessons at a reasonable rate," murmured Archie.

Mr. Brewster regarded his young relative with a lowering eye.

"What's the matter, father darling?" asked Lucille. "You seem upset."

"I am upset!" Mr. Brewster snorted. "Some people have got a nerve!" He glowered forbiddingly at an inoffensive young man in a light overcoat who had just entered, and the young man, though his conscience was quite clear and Mr. Brewster an entire stranger to him, stopped dead, blushed, and went out again—to dine elsewhere. "Some people have got the nerve of an army mule!"

"Why, what's happened?"

"Those darned McCalls have registered here!"

"No!"

"Bit beyond me, this," said Archie, insinuating himself into the conversation. "Deep waters and what not! Who are the McCalls?"

"Some people father dislikes," said Lucille. "And they've chosen his hotel to stop at.

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But, father dear, you mustn't mind. It's really a compliment. They've come because they know it's the best hotel in New York."

"Absolutely!" said Archie. "Good accommodation for man and beast! All the comforts of home! Look on the bright side, old bean. No good getting the wind up. Cheerio, old companion!"

"Don't call me old companion!"

"Eh, what? Oh, right-ho!"

Lucille steered her husband out of the danger zone, and they entered the lift.

"Poor father!" she said, as they went to their suite, "it's a shame. They must have done it to annoy him. This man McCall has a place next to some property father bought in Westchester, and he's bringing a law-suit against father about a bit of land which he claims belongs to him. He might have had the tact to go to another hotel. But, after all, I don't suppose it was the poor little fellow's fault. He does whatever his wife tells him to."

"We all do that," said Archie the married man.

Lucille eyed him fondly.

"Isn't it a shame, precious, that all husbands haven't nice wives like me?"

"When I think of you, by Jove," said Archie, fervently, "I want to babble, absolutely babble! The more I think of you," he went on, following up a train of thought which was constantly with him, "the more I wonder how you can have a father like—I mean to say, what I mean to say is, I wish I had known your mother: she must have been frightfully attractive."

"You mustn't say horrid things about father. One of these days you and father will be the greatest friends. He has only got to understand you."

"I'm open for being understood any time he cares to take a stab at it."

"You mustn't mind his being cross just now. It was enough to upset him, poor dear. Oh, I was telling you about the McCalls. Mr. McCall is one of those little, meek men, and his wife's one of those big, bullying women. It was she who started all the trouble with father. Father and Mr. McCall were very fond of each other till she made him begin the suit. I feel sure she made him come to this hotel just to annoy father. Still, they've probably taken the most expensive suite in the place, which is something."

Archie was at the telephone. His mood was now one of quiet peace. Of all the happenings which went to make up existence in New York, he liked best the cosy, *tête-à-tête* dinners with Lucille in their suite, which, owing to their engagements—for Lucille was a popular girl, with many friends—occurred all too seldom.

"Touching now the question of browsing and sluicing," he said. "I'll be getting them to send along a waiter."

"Oh, good gracious!"

"What's the matter?"

"I've just remembered. I promised faithfully I would go and see Jane Murchison to-day. And I clean forgot. I must rush."

"But, light of my soul, we are about to eat. Pop round and see her after dinner."

"I can't. She's going to a theatre to-night."

"Give her the jolly old miss-in-baulk, then, for the nonce, and spring round to-morrow."

"She's sailing for England to-morrow morning, early. No, I must go and see her now. What a shame! She's sure to make me stop to dinner. I tell you what. Order something for me, and, if I'm not back in half an hour, start."

"Jane Murchison," said Archie, "is a bally nuisance."

"Yes. But I've known her since she was eight."

"If her parents had had any proper feeling," said Archie, "they would have drowned her long before that."

He unhooked the receiver, and asked despondently to be connected with Room Service. He thought bitterly of the exigent Jane, whom he recollected dimly as a tall female with teeth. He half thought of going down to the grill-room on the chance of finding a friend there, but the waiter was on his way to the room. He decided that he might as well stay where he was.

THE waiter arrived, booked the order, and departed. Archie had just completed his toilet after a shower-bath when a musical clinking without announced the advent of the meal. He opened the door. The waiter was there with a table congested with things under covers, from which escaped a savoury and appetizing odour. In spite of his depression, Archie's soul perked up a trifle.

Suddenly he became aware that he was not the only person present who was deriving enjoyment from the scent of the meal. Standing beside the waiter and gazing wistfully at the foodstuffs was a long, thin boy of about sixteen. He was one of those boys who seem all legs and knuckles. He had pale red hair, sandy eyelashes, and a long neck; and his eyes, as he removed them from the table and raised them to Archie's, had a hungry look. He reminded Archie of a half-grown, half-starved hound.

"That smells good!" said the long boy. He inhaled deeply. "Yes, sir," he continued, as one whose mind is definitely made up, "that smells good!"

Before Archie could reply, the telephone

bell rang. It was Lucille, confirming her prophecy that the pest Jane would insist on her staying to dine.

"Jane," said Archie, into the telephone, "is a pot of poison. The waiter is here now, setting out a rich banquet, and I shall have to eat two of everything by myself."

He hung up the receiver, and, turning, met the pale eye of the long boy, who had propped himself up in the doorway.

"Were you expecting somebody to dinner?" asked the boy.

"Why, yes, old friend, I was."

"I wish——"

"Yes?"

"Oh, nothing."

The waiter left. The long boy hitched his back more firmly against the doorpost, and returned to his original theme.

"That surely does smell good!" He basked a moment in the aroma. "Yes, sir! I'll tell the world it does!"

"'That smells good!' said the long boy. 'Yes, sir,' he continued, 'that smells good!'"

Archie was not an abnormally rapid thinker, but he began at this point to get a clearly defined impression that this lad, if invited, would waive the formalities and consent to join his meal. Indeed, the idea Archie got was that, if he were not invited pretty soon, he would invite himself.

"Yes," he agreed. "It doesn't smell bad, what!"

"It smells *good!*" said the boy. "Oh, doesn't it! Wake me up in the night and ask me if it doesn't!"

"*Poulet en casserole,*" said Archie.

"Golly!" said the boy, reverently.

There was a pause. The situation began to seem to Archie a trifle difficult. He wanted to start his meal, but it began to appear that he must either do so under the penetrating gaze of his new friend or else eject the latter forcibly. The boy showed no signs of ever wanting to leave the doorway.

"You've dined, I suppose, what?" said Archie.

"I never dine."

"What!"

"Not really dine, I mean. I only get vegetables and nuts and things."

"Dieting?"

"Mother is."

"I don't absolutely catch the drift, old bean," said Archie. The boy sniffed with half-closed eyes as a wave of perfume from the *poulet en casserole* floated past him. He seemed to be anxious to intercept as much of it as possible before it got through the door.

"Mother's a food-reformer," he vouchsafed.

"She lectures on it. She makes pop and me live on vegetables and nuts and things."

Archie was shocked. It was like listening to a tale from the abyss.

"My dear old chap, you must suffer agonies—absolute shooting pains!" He had no hesitation now. Common humanity pointed out his course. "Would you care to join me in a bite now?"

"Would I!" The boy smiled a wan smile. "Would I! Just stop me in the street and ask me!"

"Come on in, then," said Archie, rightly taking this peculiar phrase for a formal acceptance. "And close the door. The fatted calf is getting cold."

Archie was not a man with a wide visiting-list among people with families, and it was so long since he had seen a growing boy in action at the table that he had forgotten what Sixteen is capable of doing with a knife and fork, when it really squares its elbows, takes a deep breath, and gets going. The spectacle which he witnessed was consequently at first a little unnerving. The long boy's idea of trifling with a meal appeared to be to swallow it whole and reach out for more. He ate like a starving Esquimaux. Archie, in the time he had spent in the trenches making the world safe for the working-man to strike in, had occasionally been quite peckish, but he sat dazed before this majestic hunger. This was real cating.

There was little conversation. The growing boy evidently did not believe in table-talk when he could use his mouth for more practical purposes. It was not until the final roll had been devoured to its last crumb that the guest found leisure to address his host. Then he leaned back with a contented sigh.

"Mother," said the human python, "says you ought to chew every mouthful thirty-three times. . . .

"Yes, sir! Thirty-three times!" He sighed again. "I haven't ever had a meal like that."

"All right, was it, what?"

"Was it! Was it! Call me up on the 'phone and ask me! Yes, sir! Mother's tipped off these darned waiters not to serve me anything but vegetables and nuts and things, darn it!"

"The mater seems to have drastic ideas about the good old feed-bag, what!"

"I'll say she has! Pop hates it as much as me, but he's scared to kick. Mother says vegetables contain all the proteids you want. Mother says, if you eat meat, your blood-pressure goes all blooey. Do you think it does?"

"Mine seems pretty well in the pink."

"She's great on talking," conceded the boy. "She's out to-night somewhere, giving a lecture on Rational Eating to some ginks. I'll have to be slipping up to our suite before she gets back." He rose, sluggishly. "That isn't a bit of roll under that napkin, is it?" he asked, anxiously.

Archie raised the napkin.

"No. Nothing of that species."

"Oh, well!" said the boy, resignedly. "Then I believe I'll be going. Thanks very much for the dinner."

"Not a bit, old top. Come again if you're ever trickling round in this direction."

The long boy removed himself slowly, loath to leave. At the door he cast an affectionate glance back at the table.

"Some meal!" he said, devoutly. "Considerable meal!"

Archie lit a cigarette. He felt like a Boy Scout who has done his day's Act of Kindness.

ON the following morning it chanced that Archie needed a fresh supply of tobacco. It was his custom, when this happened, to repair to a small shop on Sixth Avenue which he had discovered accidentally in the course of his rambles about the great city. His relations with Jno. Blake, the proprietor, were friendly and intimate. The discovery that Mr. Blake was English and had, indeed, until a few years back maintained an establishment only a dozen doors or so from Archie's London club, had served as a bond.

To-day he found Mr. Blake in a depressed mood. The tobacconist was a hearty, red-faced man, who looked like an English sporting publican—the kind of man who wears a fawn-coloured top-coat and drives to the Derby in a dog-cart; and usually there seemed to be nothing on his mind except the vagaries of the weather, concerning which he was a great conversationalist. But now moodiness had claimed him for its own. After a short and melancholy "Good morning," he turned to the task of measuring out the tobacco in silence.

Archie's sympathetic nature was perturbed.

"What's the matter, laddie?" he inquired. "You would seem to be feeling a bit of an onion this bright morning, what, yes, no? I can see it with the naked eye."

Mr. Blake grunted sorrowfully.

"I've had a knock, Mr. Moffam."

"Tell me all, friend of my youth."

Mr. Blake, with a jerk of his thumb, indicated a poster which hung on the wall behind the counter. Archie had noticed it as he came in, for it was designed to attract

the eye. It was printed in black letters on a yellow ground, and ran as follows :—

CLOVER-LEAF SOCIAL AND OUTING CLUB.

GRAND CONTEST.

PIE-EATING CHAMPIONSHIP OF THE WEST SIDE.

SPIKE O'DOWD
(Champion)
vs.
BLAKE'S UNKNOWN

FOR
A PURSE OF $50 AND SIDE-BET.

Archie examined this document gravely. It conveyed nothing to him except—what he had long suspected—that his sporting-looking friend had sporting blood as well as that kind of exterior. He expressed a kindly hope that the other's Unknown would bring home the bacon.

Mr. Blake laughed one of those hollow, mirthless laughs.

"There ain't any blooming Unknown," he said, bitterly. This man had plainly suffered. "Yesterday, yes, but not now."

Archie sighed.

"In the midst of life—— Dead?" he inquired, delicately.

"As good as," replied the stricken tobacconist. He cast aside his artificial restraint and became voluble. Archie was one of those sympathetic souls in whom even strangers readily confided their most intimate troubles. He was to those in travail of spirit very much what cat-nip is to a cat.

"It's 'ard, sir, it's blooming 'ard! I'd got the event all sewed up in a parcel, and now this young feller-me-lad 'as to give me the knock. This lad of mine—sort of cousin 'e is; comes from London, like you and me—'as always 'ad, ever since he landed in this country, a most amazing knack of stowing away grub. 'E'd been a bit underfed these last two or three years over in the old country, what with food restrictions and all, and 'e took to the food over 'ere amazing. I'd 'ave backed 'im against a ruddy orstridge! Orstridge! I'd 'ave backed 'im against 'arf-a-dozen orstridges—take 'em on one after the other in the same ring on the same evening—and given 'em a handicap, too! 'E was a jewel, that boy'. I've seen him polish off four pounds of steak and mealy potatoes and then look round kind of wolfish, as much as to ask when dinner was going to begin! That's the kind of a lad 'e was till this very morning. 'E would have out-swallowed this 'ere O'Dowd without turning a hair, as a relish before 'is tea! I'd got a couple of 'undred dollars on 'im, and thought myself lucky to get the odds. And now——"

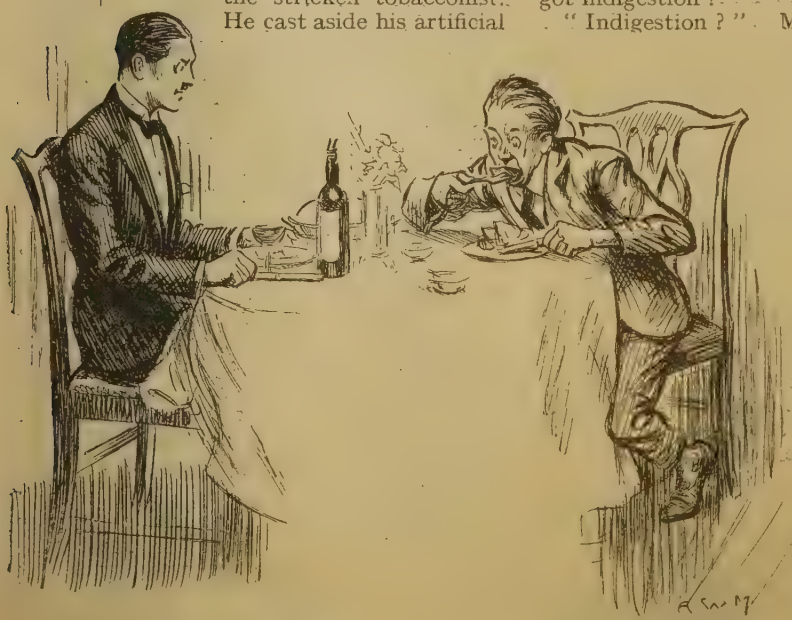
Mr. Blake relapsed into a tortured silence.

"But what's the matter with the blighter? Why can't he go over the top? Has he got indigestion?"

"Indigestion?" Mr. Blake laughed another of his hollow laughs. "You couldn't give that boy indigestion if you fed 'im on safety-razor blades. Religion's more like what 'e's got."

"Religion?"

"Well, you can call it that. Seems last night, instead of goin' and resting 'is mind at a picture-palace like I told him to, 'e sneaked off to some sort of a lecture down on Eighth Avenue. 'E said 'e'd seen a piece about it in the papers, and it was about Rational Eating, and that kind of



"The long boy's idea of trifling with a meal appeared to be to swallow it whole and reach out for more."

attracted 'im. 'E sort of thought 'e might pick up a few hints, like. 'E didn't know what rational eating was, but it sounded to 'im as if it must be something to do with food, and 'e didn't want to miss it. 'E came in here just now," said Mr. Blake, dully, " and 'e was a changed lad! Scared to death 'e was! Said the way 'e'd been goin' on in the past, it was a wonder 'e'd got any stummick left! It was a lady that give the lecture, and this boy said it was amazing what she told 'em about blood-pressure and things 'e didn't even know 'e 'ad. She showed 'em pictures, coloured pictures, of what 'appens inside the injudicious eater's stummick who doesn't chew his food, and it was like a battlefield! 'E said 'e would no more think of eatin' a lot of pie than 'e would of shootin' 'imself, and anyhow eating pie would be a quicker death. I reasoned with 'im, Mr. Moffam, with tears in my eyes. I asked 'im was he goin' to chuck away fame and wealth just because a woman who didn't know what she was talking about had shown him a lot of faked pictures. But there wasn't any doin' anything with him. 'E give me the knock and 'opped it down the street to buy nuts." Mr. Blake moaned. " Two 'undred dollars and more gone pop, not to talk of the fifty dollars 'e would have won and me to get twenty-five of! "

Archie took his tobacco and walked pensively back to the hotel. He was fond of Jno. Blake, and grieved for the trouble that had come upon him. It was odd, he felt, how things seemed to link themselves up together. The woman who had delivered the fateful lecture to injudicious eaters could not be other than the mother of his young guest of last night. An uncomfortable woman! Not content with starving her own family——

ARCHIE stopped in his tracks. A pedestrian, walking behind him, charged into his back, but Archie paid no attention. He had had one of those sudden, luminous ideas which help a man who does not do much thinking as a rule to restore his average. He stood there for a moment, almost dizzy at the brilliance of his thoughts; then hurried on. Napoleon, he mused as he walked, must have felt rather like this after thinking up a hot one to spring on the enemy.

As if Destiny were suiting her plans to his, one of the first persons he saw as he entered the lobby of the Cosmopolis was the long boy. He was standing at the bookstall, reading as much of a morning paper as could be read free under the vigilant eyes of the presiding girl. Both he and she were observing the unwritten rules which govern these affairs—to wit, that you may read without interference as much as can be read without touching the paper. If you touch the paper, you lose, and have to buy.

" Well, well, well! " said Archie. " Here we are again, what! " He prodded the boy amiably in the lower ribs. " You're just the chap I was looking for. Got anything on for the time being? "

The boy said he had no engagements.

" Then I want you to stagger round with me to a chappie I know on Sixth Avenue. It's only a couple of blocks away. I think I can do you a bit of good. Put you on to something tolerably ripe, if you know what I mean. Trickle along, laddie. You don't need a hat."

They found Mr. Blake brooding over his troubles in an empty shop.

" Cheer up, old thing! " said Archie. " The relief expedition has arrived." He directed his companion's gaze to the poster. " Cast your eye over that. How does that strike you? "

The long boy scanned the poster. A gleam appeared in his rather dull eye.

" Well? "

" Some people have all the luck! " said the long boy, feelingly.

" Would you like to compete, what? "

The boy smiled a sad smile.

" Would I! Would I! Say! "

" I know," interrupted Archie. " Wake you up in the night and ask you! I knew I could rely on you, old thing," He turned to Mr. Blake. " Here's the fellow you've been wanting to meet. The finest left-and-right-hand eater east of the Rockies! He'll fight the good fight for you."

Mr. Blake's English training had not been wholly overcome by residence in New York. He still retained a nice eye for the distinctions of class.

" But this young gentleman's a young gentleman," he urged, doubtfully, yet with hope shining in his eye. " He wouldn't do it."

" Of course, he would. Don't be ridic, old thing."

" Wouldn't do what? " asked the boy.

" Why, save the old homestead by taking on the champion. Dashed sad case, between ourselves! This poor egg's nominee has given him the raspberry at the eleventh hour, and only you can save him. And you owe it to him to do something, you know, because it was your jolly old mater's lecture last night that made the nominee quit. You must charge in and take his place. Sort of poetic justice, don't you know, and what not! " He turned to Mr. Blake. " When is the conflict supposed to start? Two-thirty? You haven't any important engagement for two-thirty, have you? "

" No. Mother's lunching at some ladies'

club, and giving a lecture afterwards. I can slip away."

Archie patted his head. "Then leg it where glory waits you, old bean!"

The long boy was gazing earnestly at the poster. It seemed to fascinate him.

"Pie!" he said in a hushed voice.

The word was like a battle-cry.

AT about nine o'clock next morning, in a suite at the Hotel Cosmopolis, Mrs. Cora Bates McCall, the eminent lecturer on Rational Eating, was seated at breakfast with her family. Before her sat Mr. McCall, a little hunted-looking man, the natural peculiarities of whose face were accentuated by a pair of glasses of semi-circular shape, like half-moons with the horns turned up. Behind these, Mr. McCall's eyes played a perpetual game of peekaboo, now peering over them, anon ducking down and hiding behind them. He was sipping a cup of anti-caffeine. On his right, toying listlessly with a plateful of cereal, sat his son, Washington. Mrs. McCall herself was eating a slice of Health Bread and nut butter. For she practised as well as preached the doctrines which she had striven for so many years to inculcate in an unthinking populace. Her day always began with a light but nutritious breakfast, at which a peculiarly uninviting cereal, which looked and tasted like an old straw hat that had been run through a meat chopper, competed for first place in the dislike of her husband and son with a more than usually offensive brand of imitation coffee. Mr. McCall was inclined to think that he loathed the imitation coffee rather more than the cereal, but Washington held strong views on the latter's superior ghastliness. Both Washington and his father, however, would have been fair-minded enough to admit that it was a close thing.

Mrs. McCall regarded her offspring with grave approval.

"I am glad to see, Lindsay," she said to her husband, whose eyes sprang dutifully over the glass fence as he heard his name, "that Washy has recovered his appetite. When he refused his dinner last night, I was afraid that he might be sickening for something. Especially as he had quite a flushed look. You noticed his flushed look?"

"He did look flushed."

"Very flushed. And his breathing was almost stertorous. And, when he said that he had no appetite, I am bound to say that I was anxious. But he is evidently perfectly well this morning. You do feel perfectly well this morning, Washy?"

The heir of the McCalls looked up from his cereal. He was a long, thin boy of about sixteen, with pale red hair, sandy eyelashes, and a long neck.

"Uh-huh," he said.

Mrs. McCall nodded.

"Surely now you will agree, Lindsay, that a careful and rational diet is what a boy needs? Washy's constitution is superb. He has a remarkable stamina, and I attribute it entirely to my

"The long boy was gazing earnestly at the poster. 'Pie!' he said in a hushed voice. The word was like a battle-cry."

careful supervision of his food. I shudder when I think of the growing boys who are permitted by irresponsible people to devour meat, candy, pie——" She broke off. "What is the matter, Washy?"

It seemed that the habit of shuddering at the thought of pie ran in the McCall family, for at the mention of the word a kind of internal shimmy had convulsed Washington's lean frame, and over his face there had come an expression that was almost one of pain. He had been reaching out his hand for a slice of Health Bread, but now he withdrew it rather hurriedly and sat back breathing hard.

"I'm all right," he said, huskily.

"Pie," proceeded Mrs. McCall, in her platform voice. She stopped again abruptly. "Whatever *is* the matter, Washington? You are making me nervous."

"I'm all right."

Mrs. McCall had lost the thread of her remarks. Moreover, having now finished her breakfast, she was inclined for a little light reading. One of the subjects allied to the matter of dietary on which she felt deeply was the question of reading at meals. She was of the opinion that the strain on the eye, coinciding with the strain on the digestion, could not fail to give the latter the short end of the contest; and it was a rule at her table that the morning paper should not even be glanced at till the conclusion of the meal. She said that it was upsetting to begin the day by reading the paper, and events were to prove that she was occasionally right.

ALL through breakfast the *New York Chronicle* had been lying neatly folded beside her plate. She now opened it, and, with a remark about looking for the report of her yesterday's lecture at the Butterfly Club, directed her gaze at the front page, on which she hoped that an editor with the best interests of the public at heart had decided to place her.

Mr. McCall, jumping up and down behind his glasses, scrutinized her face closely as she began to read. He always did this on these occasions, for none knew better than he that his comfort for the day depended largely on some unknown reporter whom he had never met. If this unseen individual had done his work properly and as befitted the importance of his subject, Mrs. McCall's mood for the next twelve hours would be as uniformly sunny as it was possible for it to be. But sometimes the fellows scamped their job disgracefully; and once, on a day which lived in Mr. McCall's memory, they had failed to make a report at all.

To-day, he noted with relief, all seemed to be well. The report actually was on the front page, an honour rarely accorded to his wife's utterances. Moreover, jugging from the time it took her to read the thing, she had evidently been reported at length.

"Good, my dear?" he ventured. "Satisfactory?"

"Eh?" Mrs. McCall smiled meditatively. "Oh, yes, excellent. They have used my photograph, too. Not at all badly reproduced."

"Splendid!" said Mr. McCall.

Mrs. McCall gave a sharp shriek, and the paper fluttered from her hand.

"My dear!" said Mr. McCall, with concern.

His wife had recovered the paper, and was reading with burning eyes. A bright wave of colour had flowed over her masterful features. She was breathing as stertorously as ever her son Washington had done on the previous night.

"Washington!"

A basilisk glare shot across the table and turned the long boy to stone—all except his mouth, which opened feebly.

"Washington! Is this true?"

Washy closed his mouth, then let it slowly open again.

"My dear!" Mr. McCall's voice was alarmed. "What is it?" His eyes had climbed up over his glasses and remained there. "What is the matter? Is anything wrong?"

"Wrong! Read for yourself!"

Mr. McCall was completely mystified. He could not even formulate a guess at the cause of the trouble. That it appeared to concern his son Washington seemed to be the one solid fact at his disposal, and that only made the matter still more puzzling. Where, Mr. McCall asked himself, did Washington come in?

He looked at the paper, and received immediate enlightenment. Headlines met his eye:—

GOOD STUFF IN THIS BOY.
ABOUT A TON OF IT.
SON OF CORA BATES McCALL
FAMOUS FOOD-REFORM LECTURER
WINS
PIE-EATING CHAMPIONSHIP OF
WEST SIDE.

There followed a lyrical outburst. So uplifted had the reporter evidently felt by the importance of his news that he had been unable to confine himself to prose:—

> My children, if you fail to shine or triumph in your special line; if, let us say, your hopes are bent on some day being President, and folks ignore your proper worth, and say you've not a chance on earth—Cheer up! for in these stirring days Fame may be won in many

ways. Consider, when your spirits fall, the case of Washington McCall.

Yes, cast your eye on Washy, please! He looks just like a piece of cheese: he's not a brilliant sort of chap: he has a dull and vacant map: his eyes are blank, his face is red, his ears stick out beside his head. In fact, to end these compliments, he would be dear at thirty cents. Yet Fame has welcomed to her Hall this self-same Washington McCall.

His mother (*née* Miss Cora Bates) is one who frequently orates upon the proper kind of food which every menu should include. With eloquence the world she weans from chops and steaks and pork and beans. Such horrid things she'd like to crush, and make us live on milk and mush. But oh! the thing that makes her sigh is when she sees us eating pie. (We heard her lecture last July upon "The Nation's Menace—Pie.") Alas, the hit it made was small with Master Washington McCall.

For yesterday we took a trip to see the great Pie Championship, where men with bulging cheeks and eyes consume vast quantities of pies. A fashionable West Side crowd beheld the champion, Spike O'Dowd, endeavour to defend his throne against an upstart, Blake's Unknown. He wasn't an Unknown at all. He was young Washington McCall.

We freely own we'd give a leg if we could borrow, steal, or beg the skill old Homer used to show. (He wrote the "Iliad," you know.) Old Homer swung a wicked pen, but we are ordinary men, and cannot even start to dream of doing justice to our theme. The subject of that great repast is too magnificent and vast. We can't describe (or even try) the way those rivals wolfed their pie. Enough to say that, when for hours each had extended all his pow'rs, toward the quiet evenfall O'Dowd succumbed to young McCall.

The champion was a willing lad. He gave the public all he had. His was a genuine fighting soul. He'd lots of speed and much control. No yellow streak did he evince. He tackled apple-pie and mince. This was the motto on his shield—"O'Dowds may burst. They never yield." His eyes began to start and roll. He eased his belt another hole. Poor fellow! With a single glance one saw that he had not a chance. A python would have had to crawl and own defeat from young McCall.

At last, long last, the finish came. His features overcast with shame, O'Dowd, who'd faltered once or twice, declined to eat another slice. He tottered off, and kindly men rallied around with oxygen. But Washy, Cora Bates's son, seemed disappointed it was done. He somehow made those present feel he'd barely started on his meal. We asked him, "Aren't you feeling bad?" "Me!" said the lion-hearted lad. "Lead me"—he started for the street—"where I can get a bite to eat!" Oh, what a lesson does it teach to all of us, that splendid speech! How better can the curtain fall on Master Washington McCall!

MR. McCALL read this epic through, then he looked at his son. He first looked at him over his glasses, then through his glasses, then over his glasses again, then through his glasses once more. A curious expression was in his eyes. If such a thing had not been so impossible, one would have said that his gaze had in it something of respect, of admiration, even of reverence.

"But how did they find out your name?" he asked, at length.

Mrs. McCall exclaimed impatiently.

"Is *that* all you have to say?"

"No, no, my dear, of course not, quite so. But the point struck me as curious."

"Wretched boy," cried Mrs. McCall, "were you insane enough to reveal your name?"

Washington wriggled uneasily. Unable to endure the piercing stare of his mother, he had withdrawn to the window, and was looking out with his back turned. But even there he could feel her eyes on the back of his neck.

"I didn't think it 'ud matter," he mumbled. "A fellow with tortoiseshell-rimmed specs asked me, so I told him. How was I to know——"

His stumbling defence was cut short by the opening of the door.

"Hallo-allo-allo! What ho! What ho!"

Archie was standing in the doorway, beaming ingratiatingly on the family.

The apparition of an entire stranger served to divert the lightning of Mrs. McCall's gaze from the unfortunate Washy. Archie, catching it between the eyes, blinked and held on to the wall. He had begun to regret that he had yielded so weakly to Lucille's entreaty that he should look in on the McCalls and use the magnetism of his personality upon them in the hope of inducing them to settle the lawsuit. He wished, too, if the visit had to be paid that he had postponed it till after lunch, for he was never at his strongest in the morning. But Lucille had urged him to go now and get it over, and here he was.

"I think," said Mrs. McCall, icily, "that you must have mistaken your room."

Archie rallied his shaken forces.

"Oh, no. Rather not. Better introduce myself, what? My name's Moffam, you know. I'm old Brewster's son-in-law, and all that sort of rot, if you know what I mean." He gulped and continued. "I've come about this jolly old lawsuit, don't you know."

Mr. McCall seemed about to speak, but his wife anticipated him.

"Mr. Brewster's attorneys are in communication with ours. We do not wish to discuss the matter."

Archie took an uninvited seat, eyed the Health Bread on the breakfast table for a moment with frank curiosity, and resumed his discourse.

"No, but I say, you know! I'll tell you what happened. I hate to totter in where I'm not wanted and all that, but my wife made such a point of it. Rightly or wrongly she regards me as a bit of a hound in the diplomacy line, and she begged me to look you up and see whether we couldn't do something about settling the jolly old thing. I mean to say, you know, the old bird—old Brewster, you know—is considerably perturbed about the affair—hates the thought of being in a posish where he has either got to bite his old pal McCall in the gizzard or be bitten by him—and—well, and so forth, don't you know! How about it?" He broke off. "Great Scot! I say, what!"

So engrossed had he been in his appeal that he had not observed the presence of the pie-eating champion, between whom and himself a large potted plant intervened. But now Washington, hearing the familiar voice, had moved from the window and was confronting him with an accusing stare.

"*He* made me do it!" said Washy, with the stern joy a sixteen-year-old boy feels when he sees somebody on to whose shoulders he can shift trouble from his own. "That's the fellow who took me to the place!"

"What are you talking about, Washington?"

"I'm telling you! He got me into the thing."

"Do you mean this—this——" Mrs. McCall shuddered. "Are you referring to this pie-eating contest?"

"You bet I am!"

"Is this true?" Mrs. McCall glared stonily at Archie. "Was it you who lured my poor boy into that—that——"

"Oh, absolutely. The fact is, don't you know, a dear old pal of mine who runs a tobacco shop on Sixth Avenue was rather in the soup. He had backed a chappie against the champion, and the chappie was converted by one of your lectures and swore off pie at the eleventh hour. Dashed hard luck on the poor chap, don't you know! And then I got the idea that our little friend here was the one to step in and save the situash, so I broached the matter to him. And I'll tell you one thing," said Archie, handsomely, "I don't know what sort of a capacity the original chappie had, but I'll bet he wasn't in your son's class. Your son has to be seen to be believed! Absolutely! You ought to be proud of him!" He turned in friendly fashion to Washy. "Rummy we should meet again like this! Never dreamed I should find you here. And, by Jove, it's absolutely marvellous how fit you look after yesterday. I had a sort of idea you would be groaning on a jolly old bed of sickness and all that."

There was a strange gurgling sound in the background. It resembled something getting up steam. And this, curiously enough, is precisely what it was. The thing that was getting up steam was Mr. Lindsay McCall.

THE first effect of the Washy revelations on Mr. McCall had been merely to stun him. It was not until the arrival of Archie that he had had leisure to think; but since Archie's entrance he had been thinking rapidly and deeply.

For many years Mr. McCall had been in a state of suppressed revolution. He had smouldered, but had not dared to blaze. But this startling upheaval of his fellow-sufferer, Washy, had acted upon him like a high explosive. There was a strange gleam in his eye, a gleam of determination. He was breathing hard.

"Washy!"

His voice had lost its deprecating mildness. It rang strong and clear.

"Yes, pop?"

"How many pies did you eat yesterday?" Washy considered.

"A good few."

"How many? Twenty?"

"More than that. I lost count. A good few."

"And you feel as well as ever?"

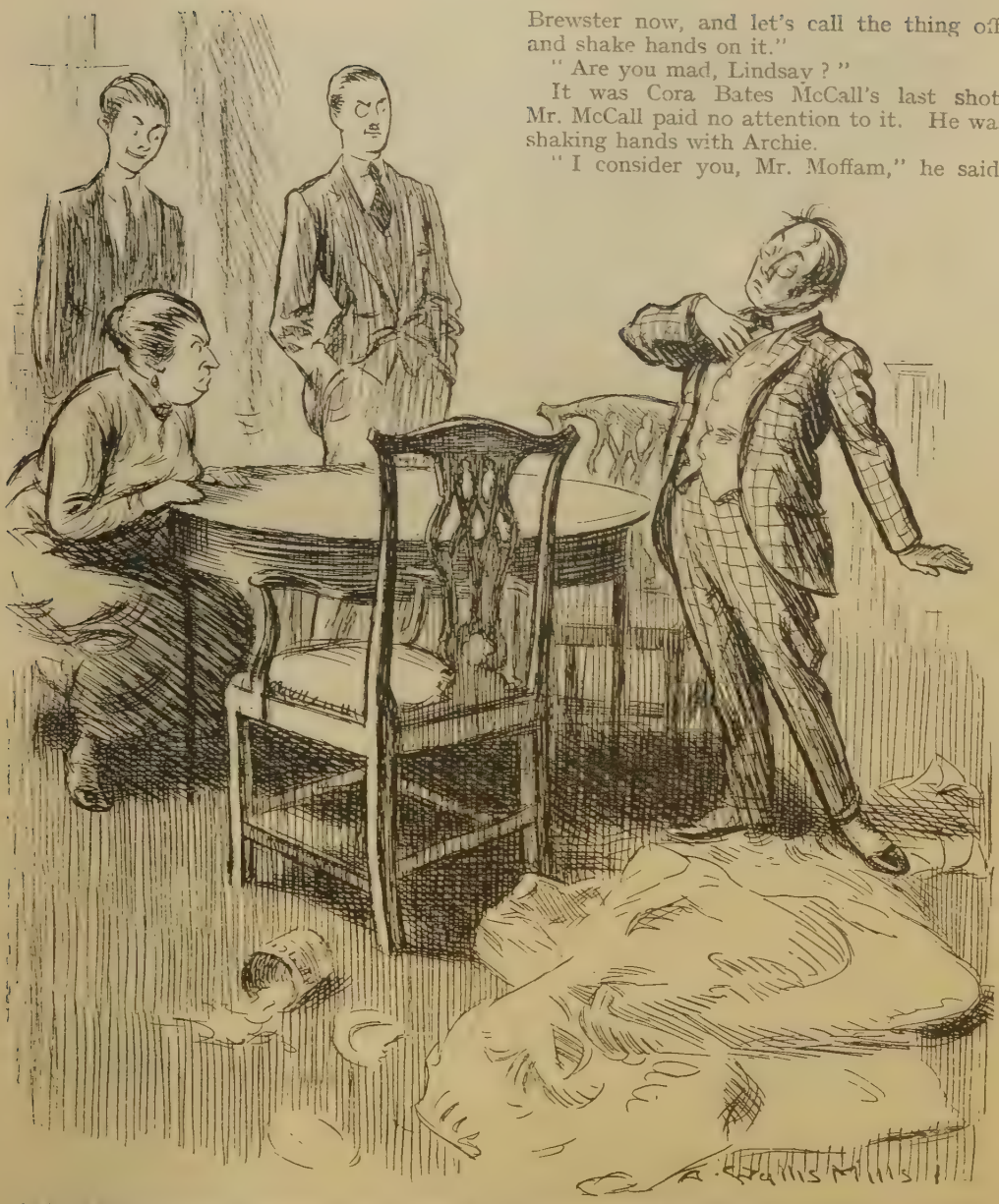
"I feel fine."

Mr. McCall dropped his glasses. He glowered for a moment at the breakfast table. His eye took in the Health Bread, the imitation coffee-pot, the cereal, the nut butter. Then with a swift movement he seized the cloth, jerked it forcibly, and brought the entire contents rattling and crashing to the floor.

"Lindsay!"

Mr. McCall met his wife's eye with quiet determination. It was plain that something had happened in the hinterland of Mr. McCall's soul.

"Cora," he said, resolutely, "I have come to a decision. I've been letting you run things your own way a little too long in this family. I'm going to assert myself. For one thing, I've had all I want of this food-reform foolery. Look at Washy! Yesterday that boy seems to have consumed anything from a couple of hundredweight to a ton of pie, and he has thriven on it! Thriven! I don't want to hurt your feelings, Cora, but Washington and I have drunk our last cup of anti-caffeine! If you care to go on with the stuff, that's your look-out. But Washy and I are through."



"Mr. McCall seized the cloth and brought the entire contents crashing to the floor. 'Cora,' he said, 'I'm going to assert myself. I've had all I want of this food-reform foolery.'"

He silenced his wife with a masterful gesture, and turned to Archie. "And there's another thing. I never liked the idea of that lawsuit, but I let you talk me into it. Now I'm going to do things my way. Mr. Moffam, I'm glad you looked in this morning. I'll do just what you want. Take me to Dan Brewster now, and let's call the thing off, and shake hands on it."

"Are you mad, Lindsay?"

It was Cora Bates McCall's last shot. Mr. McCall paid no attention to it. He was shaking hands with Archie.

"I consider you, Mr. Moffam," he said, "the most sensible young man I have ever met!"

Archie blushed modestly.

"Awfully good of you, old bean," he said. "I wonder if you'd mind telling my jolly old father-in-law that? It'll be a bit of news for him!"

Next month: "A Room at the Hermitage."

MAN'S PEACE OF MIND

by

Hylton Cleaver

ILLUSTRATED BY
S SEYMOUR LUCAS

I.

"I'VE a subtle idea," said Judy, "that Madeline has been severely smitten."

From the welter of cushions where she lay with her feet upon a chair, Judy rose up and pointed a stiffened forefinger gravely at her mother.

"Smitten," said she, "by Cupid's dart; and plump in the right spot, too. Believe me, a truly terrible thing."

Her mother merely looked at her through tortoiseshell lorgnettes and vouchsafed no answer.

Judy shook her head from side to side so rapidly that one could scarcely have told which of the many heads one saw was the real one. Then she jumped up and thrust her hands deep into the pockets of her skirt, and took a number of very long, slow strides across the room like a general on the eve of battle.

"She will suffer terribly. *Oh*, how she'll suffer! Madeline——"

At once the door was opened and a girl stood in the doorway looking round the corner in astonishment.

"You mean to say you aren't even *dressed* yet? I suppose you know there's a taxi waiting outside?"

Judy made a swift and graceful gesture. "My next will be a slight impersonation of the Widow Twankey. If you will kindly

allow me a few moments to change. Five minutes will be enough," she added, cheerfully. "Meanwhile, since you've ordered a taxi, by all means go out and sit in it."

"And in any case," she told herself as an afterthought, "it's a very bad thing to be at a dance too early when a man is going to be there especially to meet you."

Judy vanished upstairs, several at a time, slid along the passage, and in at a bedroom door, then moved to the wall and pressed a push-bell with every finger of her hand in turn, as if she were playing a scale, and whilst she waited she offered the room at large a slow, engaging smile, and to herself she said: "Simon, old man, I wonder if you are going to make up your mind to have me after all?"

From which one may arrive at a remarkable conclusion, viz., that the recipient of Cupid's dart was not her sister Madeline at all, but Judy herself. To one with a guilty conscience, anything that diverts attention, even if it be only to fasten suspicion upon another, is a pretty good thing to say; otherwise the applicant for a loan would never explain that he wanted it for a friend.

SIMON dressed slowly, and with the artistic touch of one who is face to face with a crisis in his life.

He was a young man living in dread of growing old.

You must know that Simon had once stood watching a Rugby football match when a man who had formerly been an International was playing, and he had heard a spectator turn to a friend and say: "That man is finished. He's lost his pace. It's the old, old story. Youth will be served."

Simon went home with the hump. "How old am *I*?" he questioned. "Twenty-seven. Another couple of years and *I* shall be too old. People will talk like that of me. I shall be shoved aside. Young 'uns will pass me by."

That was Simon's obsession. Other people have obsessions, and some of them let off steam by thumping a tub in the corner of the park or strutting behind a band on Sunday afternoon, but Simon could not do this. He could only create a bogey. Every season that passed was a black-edged period ruled off the span of his youth.

Then there had grown a new dread. This was the fear of falling in love. The way love got hold of a man bewildered him. One year a fellow would be rowing in a crew, his whole heart in the game, every spare moment that he had devoted to his training; the next he would have crumpled up. He would drop swiftly out of sight, and when last seen he would be mumbling devotion to a girl.

Then he would marry and he would never row again or box. "I have taken a wife," he would say, "and I cannot come."

He only remembered one man who had boldly endeavoured to train and to court at the same time, and that man had made a miserable failure of both. To fall in love was, therefore, to Simon, worse than growing old. It got you suddenly and it robbed you more. It was bad enough to know that after the age of thirty one began, so far as sport was concerned, to be slowly drawn down into the vortex of senility, but to feel that one must go one's way always in fear of Love swooping out of the shadows and ending things like a guillotine was worse.

The man who fears a sickness most is the first to take it; and so Simon fell in love. He was twenty-eight when he did it, and he stood in his room on the night he found it out, with clenched hands lifted before him. All the great things that he had meant to win before he was past his best moved in a panorama before his eyes. The Amateur Boxing Championship—a Rugby International Cap—the Diamonds at Henley. He would never achieve these now. He was not a natural athlete, but by continual trying he had succeeded in making himself a thoroughly good one, and his incentive was ambition. It had taken him years to reach the top of the tree, and now that the plums were within his reach, this thing had come to pass.

He was in love, and, worst of all, he liked it.

He was in love with Judy. She was the most wonderful girl in the world.

But in the days that intervened he had fought with himself; on this especial night he would meet Judy at a dance, and all the time he was dressing he was screwing his soul exceedingly like a shirt in the wash and wringing it out; for he had made up his mind.

SEEING without being seen, Judy watched him come across the floor of the ballroom, a tall young man, preternaturally grave, with wide, sloping shoulders and narrow hips, and she thought his crisp black hair and solemn countenance were really very nice to see.

"A woman-hater," somebody complained behind her. "Scared to death of anybody in skirts. Goodness knows why he's come to a dance."

Judy could have told them, but she didn't. She stayed in hiding and watched him looking round like a young man planning his self-defence against marauding vampires, and then at last he had seen her, and he came slowly across with the firm, determined tread of an ogre and a settled frown that

seemed to say: "Look here, Judy, you know, you can't do this with me."

But, instead, he said, gruffly: "Halloa, I've been looking for you."

Judy accepted this information with appropriate surprise, and then he stood for a little while looking round him gloomily, until at last he constrained himself to emit a short cough.

"Well, I've come to this dance," he announced, "but the only thing I know is the polka. Would that be allowed?"

"I dare say it would," said Judy. "If you could put a bit of dash into it they might mistake it for something modern."

That was how the evening began, and always afterwards he was waiting for his chance to speak, because he was going to set himself right in her eyes, and there was a tremendous deal he would have to say.

At last he managed to take her away. He sat her down and settled himself beside her, and then he leaned forward with his elbows upon his knees and his chin in his hands.

"I'd rather like to come to these things a bit more," he confided, and his voice was both strong and steady, "to learn a bit more about people like—like you; and if I were older, you can bet I would. But"—he turned to her in real sincerity—"there's something I want most awfully to do before I get past my best—something I can look back on when I'm old. I want to win the Diamonds at Henley. I've been in a lot of times, and I seem to get nearer every year. Last time I was runner-up, and I'm in absolute terror of growing old before I can win. I don't know why it is, but it's got a hold of me that I can't shake off. It seems to me that I've only got two more precious years of life—of the sort of life that's any use, that is—and if I borrow a year now I can never pay it back. But if I only wait, then I've all the rest, from thirty to seventy, to—to get to understand why people fall in love—and enjoy it."

He cleared his throat awkwardly. "I want to keep a year or so, you see—this one year should be enough—for doing something that I can remember when I'm old. It's heaven to me just to be absolutely fit and full of beans, as I am to-day—good for any game under the sun. I believe that this is the best year I shall ever have, the very highest degree of fitness I shall ever reach, and I don't want to throw it away in doing something that I shall be able to do all my life afterwards. I sha'n't feel like this much longer. I've seen brothers—I've watched chaps from my school. They all go the same old way. They're fit and hard enough, but they lose their pace. They go a little bit stiff, and then the same chance never comes again. For all I know, this season may be a final flicker before my light goes out."

He looked at her with a troubled brow.

"You don't see what I mean," he declared. "It isn't the same to you. I'm a fanatic."

He wished, more than anything else, to say: "I want you to wait for me. You're the only girl I shall ever want, but I can't take you yet. I shall never have youth again, but I can have you when youth is gone."

He couldn't say it. It was too preposterously selfish for anyone to say.

BUT whilst he was still struggling for words, she spoke.

She was sitting forward in her chair, stroking her knees with a single-feather fan, and when she turned towards him he was struck anew by her own extraordinary youthfulness. The clear light of her eyes, the fair tint of her cheeks, even each movement that she made, bespoke her girlhood. She gave him an unaffected smile.

"I know what it means to be young, too—riding—swimming." She paused a moment. "I play ice-hockey. But it isn't quite the same. A girl grows old so much sooner than a man. It's hard for a girl to wait. When a man waits—they say he's sensible; but if a girl waits half as long, they say that she's on the shelf. Do you know that?"

He caught her whimsical smile, and then she jumped suddenly to her feet and stood looking down at him rather as if he were a brother.

"That wouldn't worry me personally. I don't care much what people say."

He tried to answer: "I'm not asking you to wait. I haven't any right. You must go right ahead. Wherever you go men will be crazy about you. You must have all you want of life whilst you're young. And then if I come again later and you haven't found anyone special—you may remember."

He couldn't say a word.

He sat back in his chair with his chin, brown and clean-cut, sunk in the white wings of his collar, and his eyes downcast and full of a gloom that nothing could disguise.

He wondered if she had any idea at all what he wanted to say. She was looking away. He began to weaken. Supposing he lost her through this inherent stubbornness? Supposing he never did win the Diamonds?' He would never marry any other girl. He would become an old man, crusty and alone. And what must she be thinking of him? Folk would have told her what kind of a man he was—a woman-hater, a selfish sort of a boor. No one had ever wrung these secrets out of him before, anyway. Would

she understand that, however selfish he seemed, that was at least a compliment ?

For a few brief moments she stood before him, not now a tomboy, but very delicately youthful, and her eyes had fallen and were examining her fan, and when she spoke at last her voice was very still and small.

" It's all right. I understand what you mean."

That was all, but nobody but Judy would have ever found the pluck to say it.

In absolute silence he slowly stood up. He waited a moment, looking down at her grimly, and then he tried to loosen his collar with his finger. He jerked the lapels of his coat, and finally he cleared his throat.

" Shall we have another hop around ? " he said, hoarsely. " People seem to like to see us."

She put her arm through his gently, more than ever as if he were a rather likeable sort of brother ; and that was all.

They told her the news exactly ten days later.

" He fell down the steps of a boathouse and hit his head. They say he'll get over it because he's so tremendously strong, but he's lost his memory. They say he can't remember anything he's ever done, and they're taking him right away from the river to rest."

For a little while Judy took no notice, and then it seemed to her that she must do something to help herself if only a little ; so she went to her mother and said : " I half believe that Madeline's had a nasty knock. I think she's all topsy-turvy."

She hoped, after that, that they wouldn't stare at her quite so much.

II.

SIMON sat gloomily in the corner of a railway carriage, gazing out of the window. He had grown perceptibly older, and his brow was wrinkled like that of a man who is continually perplexed by things about him.

His father, who had been watching him intently, as if for some sign of recognition, leaned forward now that the train was really coming to a standstill at last and tapped him gently upon the knee.

" This is Victoria. Don't you remember ?"

Simon turned to him wearily and the only sign he made was one of extreme vexation. The practice of continually asking him whether he remembered this and whether he remembered that—things which, to the best of his belief, he had never seen before in his life—was taxing him to the limits of his endurance. He was absolutely bored to tears.

" No," he said, savagely ; " I *don't* remember it ! "

He heard his father heave a little sigh, saw him get up and begin to collect their property. At last the carriage door was opened and he got up and stepped down on to the platform. Next moment his father was beside him and they were walking towards the barrier together. Occasionally he looked about him dully. No light of recognition came into his eyes at all. He went like a man whose every sense is numbed. So through the barrier, and then out into the open space where other people stood waiting beside their luggage and porters were wheeling trucks mechanically to and fro. And then, with a sudden patter of feet, somebody was behind him and a hand had come quickly to rest upon his sleeve.

" Mr. Garrod ! Don't—don't you remember me ? "

He turned on his heel with a start, and stood for a moment, staring.

He saw Judy waiting there as if in appeal, and his hand went slowly up to his hat and lifted it. And now the world seemed suddenly to grow quiet about him until only Judy and he were left. Her eyes were holding his, and for the first time that everlasting question ' Don't you remember ? " had something new in the sound of it. He was conscious of his father, standing motionless beside him, and when at last his hand touched Simon's arm, Simon shook it off vexedly, and moved a little closer to Judy, with his eyes still fixed intently on hers. Something was happening. A great upheaval was taking place in the recesses of his mind. The cobwebs in his memory were being brushed away. He must have absolute quiet. His hand moved up to his brow and began to fondle the wrinkles in his forehead. He wanted Judy to speak again, and yet he did not know what he wanted her to say. But he saw her glance once towards the clock and then look up at him again as if more urgently in questioning than ever. Then she spoke again.

" Did you forget—the Diamonds ? "

Simon's father moved again and took him by the arm, but just as before Simon shook him away. His eyes were growing wide and dilated ; his lips were parting as if he were about to speak, but all the time he never moved. The whole of his strength was concentrated on a stupendous effort to remember.

For an incalculable space of time he had been left alone in a never-ending tunnel, and now for the first time a glimmer of light was showing itself ahead. All the time he stood waiting the light was coming nearer and nearer, and he saw now that it was daylight. It seemed that he, too, began to move towards it on slow, unsteady feet, and finally, all in a moment, he had reached it in a stride and

was out in the open, conscious now of nothing but a fierce and excruciating headache.

And now he was holding out both hands to Judy and looking at her in amazement. His father's face had broken into a gaze of incredulous delight and Judy had put her hands in his, but he could not smile. He was still in a maze of perplexity. There was so much to remember.

"*Did* you forget the Diamonds?" she said again; and now he found his voice at last. He turned to his father threateningly.

"What has been happening? Where have I been? What time is it? I don't understand. I was going to row. I was going down the steps."

He gave a sudden gulp that was almost one of despair, and before his father could answer him, Judy had interrupted.

"Listen," she said; "I am going away. We're leaving for Davos—for the winter sports. They're calling me now. The train will be starting. Can you remember my address? Hotel Majestic, Davos. Promise to write. I shall be coming back in the spring. I sha'n't forget."

She was going from him almost before he realized what to do. He sprang forward and tried to stop her. His father was holding him back and he and Judy were exchanging gestures. Then Judy was waving to him with her muff. She had turned and was through the barrier, and he had a definite belief that when she had turned that sparkle in her eyes meant tear-drops. He saw her wave once more. She was in the train. The train had begun to move. He turned towards his father with a look of unutterable despair, and his voice was broken with distress.

"Only a few days ago—I told her. I remember falling. What has been happening? It's summer, isn't it? Why are you wearing a coat? When's Henley?" He gripped his father's arms in a sudden desperate appeal.

"How old am I?"

His father spoke to him quickly. He said:—

"Be a man. Don't make a scene here. People are looking. You're all right. I'll tell you about it. Get into a taxi."

Simon turned as a heart-broken child will turn and went towards the kerb. A taxi crawled up and he got into it. His father sat down beside him and rested his hand just as before upon his knee.

"You remember now? You remember falling? You hit your head. We had to take you away. You went for a sea voyage. You've not been able to remember anything."

Simon interrupted wrathfully.

"But you don't tell me," he beseeched, "when Henley is? How long have I?"

"Henley has gone," his father told him gently. "You have been ill for nearly a year. It is January."

Simon took it as a man might be expected to take a sentence of death. The best year in his life had slipped from him in the dark. He had lost life's golden opportunity, and it would never come again.

IN the days that followed, Simon tried hard to decide what to write to Judy, and whilst he debated within himself he found out this little thing and that. He said, one day: "When are the Amateur Boxing Championships? I shall be just in time. With a bit of luck I might be able to win."

His father came towards him and laid both hands upon his shoulders, and when Simon lifted his eyes to his, he said as gently as he could make such firm words sound:—

"You will never be able to box again. Your head's been badly hurt. A heavy blow in the next few years might crock you for good."

Simon bowed his head to the truth. And when it was thoroughly borne in upon him he said, in a hollow tone: "I suppose there's Rugger. The season's half over. The trial games will all have been played, but I might find a place."

"You can't play Rugger," his father told him. "It would hurt you as much as boxing. You must rest for a little while, and then in the spring, perhaps, you can scull."

In the end the letter Simon wrote to Judy was a human document. He said: "If I could even have played footer I might have been able to win some sort of honour that I could look back on in after years, but there's nothing I can do but scull. Every other game they speak of is something I can play at any age—golf, tennis. They won't even let me dive. But if I let Henley go by this year without making an effort, I'd have a kind of skeleton in the cupboard all my life. I'd always be thinking: 'It might have been,' and I'd never be content. By the time that you come home I shall be starting to train, and it means I must be on the river every evening and every Saturday afternoon. I wonder if you will think me the most self-centred man who ever lived, or if you will understand?"

Judy came in from ski-ing, to find the letter, and she thought she could understand.

SIMON trained as never he had trained before, for the more he gave himself up to the job in hand the less time he had for brooding. Life grew too grim to let him be happy, as the life of a man weighed down by some obsession always does. Over and over again he told himself he had all the rest

"Mr. Garrod! Don't—don't you remember me?"

of his life in which to do nothing but love, a glorious stretch of years tempered by games he could play with Judy: golf, ice-hockey. He would ride to hounds. But he still clung to the one year left him, as if his foothold on the heights of youth were slipping, and he knew he would ever afterwards be falling down hill towards an ultimate old age. It was a miserable obsession. Sindbad the Sailor could not have been more troubled by the old man upon his back. And all Simon found to say in self-defence was: "I said I'd do it before I was thirty—and I will."

Judy came home, and as he could not bring himself to see her, she came to see him, and watched him occasionally as he sculled on summer evenings with a thoughtful smile and a pucker in her forehead.

And Henley came at last.

IN his first heat Simon resolved to leave no room for any mistake. He raced from the start, and though he led all the way, he would never ease up to save himself for further trials to come. He rowed again, passed into the semi-final; and now came the greatest race in Simon's memory.

He knew this would be so when he found a gripping excitement taking command of him as he waited at the stake-boat for the start. He could think of nothing but the fear of losing, and when at last the warning really came, nerves had made him a man whose every sinew was a live wire. For all his eager waiting the start took him unexpectedly, and he snatched at the first stroke in a kind of panic when he found he was late away. For a few brief seconds his boat rocked stupidly as the water splashed about his blades, and he knew he was losing ground. Then he collected himself with a grim repression, and went after his man. He was nearly a length behind, and he had to make up that length before he could settle down to his normal stroke, and though he was used to the Henley course, he was not used to mulling the start, and he was out of his reckoning.

For a couple of dozen strokes he kept up the highest pressure he knew, and then at last he glanced towards the other station and saw that he was level with his man, and he settled to the perfect swing and rhythm which protracted training had made his own, driving the blades through with a mechanical ease and thrusting home with the legs each time he swung, with a steady, continual power. He was keeping abreast his man, and he picked up courage. His stroke was unchanging now, and he knew he could keep it so; but he had left uncounted the racing judgment of the other man. No sooner had Simon's length and swing begun to tell than his rival opened out into a spurt of his own. Simon had spurted to make up lost distance at the start, and he must collect himself before he could spurt again. This was the other's chance. He began to increase the rate of striking gradually, but with perfect judgment. At last he was rowing a faster stroke than Simon had ever expected so early in the race, and it was taking him up.

Simon glanced towards him once, and it was enough. Anxiety seized him anew, and he began to answer. He caught up with a wonderful effort, rowed a few strokes neck and neck, then found himself falling behind again. The other had not yet gained enough. He was still striking the water at a faster rate than Simon, and was moving better. Simon lay back and drove with his legs as if, though nothing else could help him, determination might. For a brief while a mood of detachment seized him. He seemed alone on the water, and nobody could realize how much this race meant to his sense of pride. The cheering from the crowded punts moored along the booms began to grow in intensity. He could make nothing of it, but it heartened him, and he glanced over again to that other station. His rival was nearly a length ahead, and he had settled down to a longer stroke. Simon collected himself for a further greater effort. He hit up the stroke, and began to creep up just as before, then whilst he was still not level, the other man answered him with a still greater spurt of his own.

Now Simon began to lose his head. Acute despair entered his soul like iron. All he had sacrificed for the chance of winning the Diamonds came back into memory and mocked him. He had missed his great year. He was past his best. Old age was reaching out to touch his shoulder even as he swung to his strokes. Every dog has his day. Every man living has one best year in life. Simon's had come and gone, and fortune had robbed him of it with a stupid grin. But he would not accept this verdict. He had never yet got the lead throughout the race, but he would fight this other man for it now. He gritted his teeth and began to reach for a greater drive. He was swinging well, and his supple arms were working easily. All that he lacked was speed. He wondered if he were going up. A quick glance next moment told him he had already gone up. They were rowing neck and neck, and he caught one glimpse of drying sweat lying in streaks down the other's face. The roar of encouragement from the bank was doubling; his head was throbbing to the changing tremor of it, and he was trying to gauge exactly how far

there was yet to go. His teeth were pressing into his underlip, but he did not know that his lip was bleeding. He only knew that he had not yet got the nose of his boat ahead. But he was spurting still, and he held to his pace. He was creeping inch by inch to the front. The rhythm of his bodywork was doing it. Nothing he did throughout his strokes could upset the perfect balance of his boat, and even now he was not rowing as he had used to row. He was not at his best. Last year he would have led this man all the way.

He glanced across once more and finally, and now he saw what he had to face. The other man had one spurt left, and he was swinging to it now. Where Simon had gone ahead inch by inch, this man was driving up foot by foot. Nothing could stop him. They were level again. Simon was falling back. He felt his head drooping between his shoulders, and his arms slowly giving way to acute fatigue. He strove with all his might to sit up. His head toppled back, and he kept it there by sheer resolution. His numbed legs were driving at the stretcher just as before, but he had lost control of them, and they were driving automatically. He must find an answering spurt somewhere with which to hold this final challenge. It was no use. Nothing that he could do would stave it off. He was losing sight of the other man. He was done. To the end he kept swinging and reaching. That was all. They gave the verdict as two lengths, and the other man fell out of his boat with the shock of having won. Simon did nothing. He just sat where his shell had brought him, with his head between his knees and his blades quite motionless upon the surface of the water, the picture of a man who had tried his uttermost and who had failed.

III.

SIMON stood beside Judy like a disappointed child whose home-made fireworks have been a dismal failure.

"I'm sorry I led you to think I could win," said he. "It makes me look pretty ridiculous now."

Judy moved from the edge of the balcony towards him, and when she spoke her voice was low.

"You lost because you were stale. Everybody says so. You worried into a fever about it, and you never rested for a day when you wanted to rest."

She looked up at him now severely.

"You *can't* win if you haven't got peace of mind."

He gazed at her in surprise. She turned to lean over the balcony and look down thoughtfully on to the river. "You hadn't got your mind on the race. All the time you were training you wanted something else." She drew a deep breath, and then she said it. "You wanted me."

He stood quite motionless beside her, and his heart seemed to cease its beating for nearly half a minute.

"I did," he answered, when he could trust himself to speak. "I know I did."

She nodded her head reflectively, and at last she looked up from fingering her necklace and said: "I'm glad you did lose—in a sense. It's helped me make up my mind." She nodded her head sententiously.

"It's all right. You're wide awake, and it's true. Somebody's got to do something, and you look as though you wanted to try again another year. Well, I've waited all this time to watch you do something for yourself, and now I want you to do something for me, and before you do it I think we might get married."

Simon began to regain his lost breath slowly. He stood looking at her stolidly, and then he reached out his hands and took hold of hers. She came a little nearer.

"A man's as old as he feels," she told him, "and you need to be happy before you feel young again. You're old because you've made yourself old, just as you made yourself stale before the race. I never knew anyone who wanted looking after quite so badly in all my life."

He began to speak, but she stopped him.

"There isn't a day to lose. We must have a bit of a holiday—honeymoon, you know—and then you're to go into training again, and I—I'm going to train you."

He began to stammer inquiries. "Why? But——"

"The Olympic Games," said Judy, by way of explanation. "I want you to scull for England, and I want you to win—not for yourself, but for *me*, to remember when I'm old, and so I'm going to help you."

"But," said Simon, "*me?* Why, I'm beaten — they won't have *me* — they want——"

"The man who beat you was an American, and he won. Nobody ran him so closely as you. The papers are talking about it to-day, and they want you to scull for England—just as I do."

He drew a deep breath, and tilted her face up by the chin, peering into it as one might who sees visions in a crystal globe.

"You want me to give up all that time?" said he. "You *want* me to scull?"

"Of course I do," said Judy. "All your life you've been like a child in the dark, frightened of something that didn't exist. You've never once been happy, and now you're going to find out that these things don't depend on how old you are; they depend on your peace of mind."

"It isn't the Yank at all. You're wrong. It's Simon, the – the Englishman! He's leading."

"But I thought," said Simon, "that when a chap married——"

"It depends whom he marries," said Judy. "You're going to marry me." And, just as her head came very near to his coat, she added: "You could have won the Diamonds if you'd married me first."

OUT of a sky of vivid blue the sun shone down upon unruffled waters.

A slight, trim figure in dazzling white rose in a punt, like some princess upon her royal barge, and stood for a moment shading her eyes and looking intently up the clear straightness of the course. Somebody called her "Judy," but she never turned her head.

The chatter of voices round about was dying into a hush, and the long lanes of humanity robed in kaleidoscopic colour which bounded the river grew still with waiting.

A man behind Judy turned to speak to a woman, and she heard him say:—

"The final of the sculls—the Englishman and the Yank. They say the Yank beat him at Henley."

And then, in a little while, from a mile away up the river the clamour of tense excitement, suddenly let loose, thundered into the air.

For a moment Judy paled, but her colour came gently back again as she settled herself as bravely as she could to wait and watch. The sun was dancing upon that wide blue stretch of river, and as far as the eye could see the course was clear and isolate, until quite suddenly two little specks of white had jumped into view upon the surface of the water, with a sparkle of light to either side just where the sun was catching the turning blades.

A moment or two went by before the watching multitude could tell assuredly that those white specks were really moving men, but they were growing in size as every second passed, and the roar from either bank was swelling louder and louder as it spread down river.

A man with binoculars jammed against his eyes stood rocking excitedly in a boat by Judy's side, and now she heard him crying out his news.

"Who's on this station? Which is it? The Yank—he's leading. Very well ahead—he's rowing long. Other fellow's about baked. Can you see? Look! What? Coming up? No—the Yank's got him beat. He's rowing fine! Look at that length. He's winning all the way, I tell you. The Yank's got him cold."

Judy's hands slowly clenched. The figures were growing nearer. She could see now the splash of the water each time the blades dipped in; she could tell each movement of their bodies as they swung, and the yelping of that delirious man behind was more than she could stand.

She turned to him in sudden royal appeal.

"Let me see, please. Quick! I want to see."

He passed the glasses to her politely, and turned to his friends as if the race were over, but Judy had them up now, and focused on the race, and all in a moment her voice came in husky deliberation . . . slowly, emphatically.

"It isn't the Yank at all. You're wrong. It's *Simon*, the—the Englishman! *He's* leading. Look for yourself!"

She threw him his glasses back and began to exult. The thunder of cheers had swelled up all around her now, and she joined in with the abandon of intense relief. She shouted anything. She knew that he could not hear, but she had to shout. Her voice was lost in the roar of applause, but she was a part of it.

Then they were alongside. Judy could see them clearly. Simon, the nearest, with his jaw hard-set and his blue eyes staring into space, and his skin tanned brown against the white of his vest, and glistening in the sun; and across on the other station the lean American opening into a last spurt, just such as had won him the race at Henley.

But now Simon had the lead, and he could answer. He kept his length and his body-swing undisturbed as he passed, but all the time he was driving his legs for all he knew and keeping his shell ahead.

Judy gave one great wave of her hand, rocked in her boat, swayed backwards, and overbalanced on to a pile of cushions.

The crowd swayed round her on precarious craft, but Judy lay where she tumbled, trapped between laughter and tears, with hands waving joyfully aloft, wondering whether she dared to wave her feet.

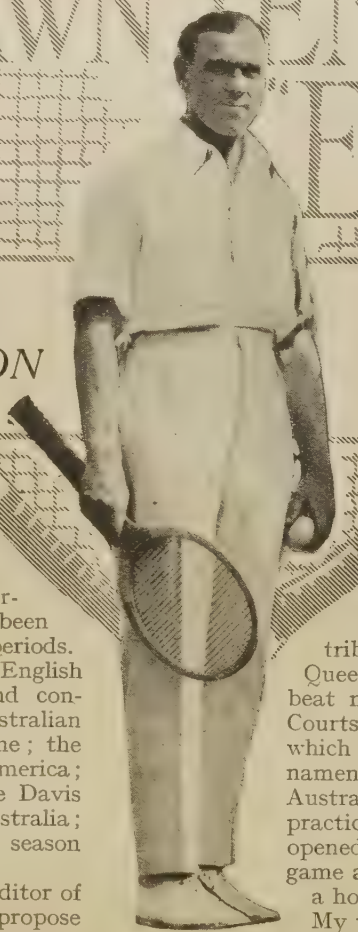
"Our man's won!" she heard a proud voice calling, and she turned to look at this boastful individual in annoyance.

"*Your* man!" she grumbled under her breath. "Bother you—when he was *your* man he lost. It wasn't till he was *my* man that he won."

My Lawn Tennis "Enemies"

By G. L. PATTERSON

Ex-Champion of the World



SINCE the conclusion of the war permitted a return to games, lawn tennis, so far as the writer is personally concerned, has been divided into five distinct periods. The first embraced the English season of 1919; the second concerned the visit of the Australian Army team to Paris last June; the third comprised my trip to America; the fourth period covered the Davis Cup matches at home in Australia; while the fifth phase is the season now in progress.

At the invitation of the Editor of THE STRAND MAGAZINE I propose to make a few brief comments on the strokes, methods, strong and weak points, of some of the leading players encountered during "this crowded hour" of my lawn-tennis career. Between the April of 1919 and the January of 1920 I played the game in three different continents against the champions and aspiring champions of many countries. In my analyses of these matches I shall try to explain how I attempted—often unsuccessfully—to overcome my various antagonists.

A large number of these "stars" were, of course, competing at Wimbledon in the recent championships, and it may therefore be of interest to those of my readers who saw them "in action" to hear just how they appealed to one who had the good fortune to meet them on the court in divers parts of the world.

Without any further "knocking-up," I will commence my difficult but congenial task by paying a small tribute to P. M. Davson, of Queen's Club, West Kensington, who beat me in the Final of the Covered Courts Championships last season, which was, incidentally, the first tournament I ever competed in outside Australia. I had had several weeks' practice on wood before the meeting opened, and was prepared for a hard game against Davson, but hardly such a hollow defeat (three sets to love).

My plans for playing the ex-holder of the covered title looked simple enough on paper, viz.: to hold the fort at the net on every possible occasion. My opponent, I have since concluded, no doubt determined to make this position untenable. At any rate, his passing drives were so fast, accurate, and deceptive, and the occasional lob so perfectly placed, that one was soon in trouble. And I could not get out of it. Nevertheless I really believe that defeat was a blessing in disguise, for later in the season one realized that failures properly understood often improve one's game. I should very much like to play P. M. D. again, just for practice, but I think I will wait till he is a bit older before challenging his superiority on wood.

"Major" Ritchie, at picturesque Roehampton, provided me with my

next big problem. Fortunately the match was played in the fresh air, and the court was hard in places, in spite of the rain. This surface helped the service more than at Queen's, and I was thus enabled to get to the net sooner and more often. Consequently one could intercept Ritchie's machine-like drives and volley or smash for the winning point. In the final of this tournament I met G. H. Dodd, the South African, and the heavy court on that day helped me more than my opponent.

It was at Surbiton in my first grass meeting in this country that I encountered your great tactician, H. Roper Barrett, and perhaps readers will pardon me for saying that I played what I personally consider one of my best games of the season. As a matter of fact I won more easily than at one time seemed likely, mainly because Barrett, by cleverly forcing me so often into the corners, led me to try a new stroke. This was a cut or chop from deep down the right-hand court, either short or half court to my opponent's forehand, with enough cut on it to make the ball cling to the grass. To make this shot I shorten my grip considerably (if the ball is within reach), and this naturally facilitates wrist action. I have to thank Roper Barrett in a very large measure for the discovery of this shot as an offensive-defensive stroke. Usually, of course, the cut stroke should be avoided behind the service line, but closer to the net it is very useful for the purpose of putting away short returns.

A few words about my general theory of attack will not, perhaps, be out of place here. It can be stated in five words—*Every player has a weakness.* Therefore, pound away at his weak spot before he can discover and pound away at yours. Although everyone admits that a player plays as well as he is allowed to by his opponent, few realize what a really fundamental truth this is. To my mind its importance is often overlooked by both players and critics—and good ones too. The unseen working of this "law" is the real reason, I fancy, for so many apparent losses of form just when a player appears to be right at his best.

Two players defeated me in the Allied Armies meeting in Paris, viz., Pat O'Hara Wood and André Gobert. The match with my fellow-countryman, to tell the truth, was not a very great one—errors were frequent. The contest, nevertheless, ran to five sets. However, after gaining a lead of 3–1 in the final set, I could not "close," presumably because O'Hara would not let me.

One of the methods by which Gobert beat me at this particular meeting was, as he told me after the match, by being able to tell where I intended to place my service. (This differs from anticipation.) This bit of information was invaluable, for on my return to England I set out to devise some method of disguising my intention in the service delivery. I am convinced my service was more successful in our second meeting. He always made his best and most valuable shots when they were most needed, which is a hard thing to do. I wish one had the knack. Service really dominated the situation, as it does in most matches the classic French player takes part in. Another player I met in Paris who left a lasting impression on my mind was Mishu, of Roumania, nowadays the centre of attraction at so many English and Continental tournaments. In his collection of weird and wonderful strokes this most unorthodox player undoubtedly possesses one of the best backhand drives I have ever had the "misfortune" to play against—when it is working.

At Wimbledon in the memorable Victory Championships a long and arduous campaign, numbering eight singles, to say nothing of doubles, resulted in the writer achieving that ambition which my father had instilled into me some time after we started playing the game. My tactics against Barrett, T. M. Mavrogordato, and S. N. Doust consisted of serving to their weaker "half" with variations, and taking the net. Their service I also returned whenever possible to the backhand, once again seeking the—to me—magnetic net. I was rather lucky, perhaps, to find André Gobert, my opponent in the fifth round, nervy and uncertain, while I was, fortunately, just the reverse. They tell me it was one of the worst matches seen at Wimbledon for years; I can quite believe it. I have no hesitation in saying that some unhappy line decisions were largely responsible for this.

For a big ordeal like Wimbledon one must be fit and ready for all emergencies, and I do not mind confessing that I took great care to ensure entering the championships as fit as possible. In *my* opinion, it is most unwise to risk getting stale by playing countless singles at pre-Wimbledon meetings such as Beckenham or Queen's. After all, half the battle, other things being equal, is to be at your best just at the required time. To do this, training and careful planning are absolutely essential. I have no doubt whatever that the challenger this year worked out his salvation on these lines.

M. J. G. Ritchie gave me decidedly the hardest game in the championships. On a slippery court, following showers, the English veteran's returns made great pace off the court. His service, too, shot much more

MR. M. J. G. RITCHIE.

MR. P. M. DAVSON.

MR. H. ROPER BARRETT.

than usual, which, no doubt, was arranged for my discomfort.

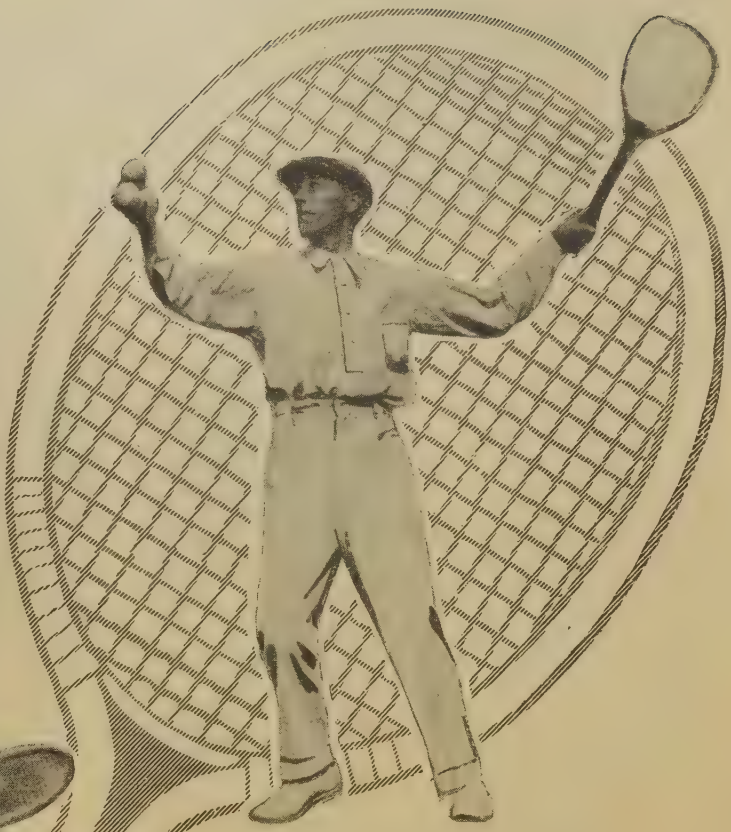
Colonel Kingscote's play in the Final disappointed everyone. Maybe, however, it was partly the story of a man not being allowed to play his own game. I knew, for instance, that he did not like a high, bounding service on his backhand; anything low he loves. Against his not too strong service I found it fairly easy to get to the net. To my way of thinking, Kingscote is not deliberate enough in his play, and in trying to "bustle" ends by "bustling" himself.

In challenging Norman Brookes for the world title I did not, of course, overlook his comparatively weak backhand, and also at the same time kept the ball well away from that dangerous forehand cross-court shot of his. I fancy he followed up his service too much, and would indeed have been well advised to stay back more. One seemed, too, to be passing him more perhaps than he realized. I tried to profit by the late A. F. Wilding's mistake of 1914, and went for the sidelines whenever possible. Moreover, I think I studied Brookes's game in practice just a wee bit more closely than he studied mine.

I think that about covers the players I met over here during those very strenuous days last summer. Now for a few words about America's star performers. I will make a start with "Freddie" Alexander, because as a little boy I used to watch him play when he visited Australia for the challenge round of the Davis Cup in 1908. I remember

chasing the balls for him at practice on our private court at Melbourne. At thirty-nine F. B. Alexander still plays a very vigorous game and is a great sportsman. I avoided his hard "topped" forehand as much as possible. His well-placed service is hardly so severe as of yore, and it was by attacking his backhand that I managed to win.

Another tussle with W. M. Washburn, whom I had previously beaten in Paris, again went my way because of the little extra speed which I was able to produce at the most needed moment. Washburn passes well on the forehand and covers the net well in volleying. His service I also found deceptive



MR. NORMAN BROOKES.

COLONEL A. P. P. KINGSCOTE.

and hard to do very much with. W. M. Johnston, the American champion, proved just too good for me in the U.S. Championships. I started patchily and ultimately lost the odd set in five. It was a fluctuating contest in which the play was occasionally quite poor, owing, no doubt, to the intense excitement which prevailed. In the fourth set, when my opponent led by two sets to one and four games to one, it was by going for the sidelines more often and staying back a bit on the service that I overhauled him and won 6–4. In the last set lack of concentration at the critical stage of five all and 40–15 on my service lost me three points—inches out. Just previously I thought I had him, but he slipped home.

W. T. Tilden I consider the most versatile and audacious of the American players. A great hitter, back and fore, high or low. And they come off, too. He cuts a lot from the back of the court and is a great lobber, but somewhat weak against deep balls of this variety himself. Master of every stroke is Tilden, but not yet the tactician I fancy he hopes to be. Unorthodox to a degree on occasions, and very liable to take up

weird positions on the court, yet he manages to execute some amazing shots. Inclined to be nervy. The possessor of a tremendous service, W. T. Tilden is altogether a most interesting player to watch or play, and with no really weak spots.

Maurice McLoughlin, the Californian, is another very interesting personality to study. Partly, I think, because of the contrast provided by his play to-day and that of 1913, when he was the challenger at Wimbledon. McLoughlin, sad to relate, has lost complete control of that fiery service which used to frighten everybody, and he now delivers slow "googlies" which only break one way. Otherwise his game is as good as ever, especially overhead.

R. N. Williams I did not meet in singles last autumn, but from observation I regard him as the most perfect player playing, both for style and crispness of execution. He plays a rising ball, using no top spin, but just a semblance of cut. An erratic tendency which often results in the missing of easy shots is his only weakness.

C. S. Garland, another American who has been here this summer, is much better than he looks; his service is hard to deal with and his ground strokes perfection. He also places with delightful ease and skill.

I do not think I ought to close these few reminiscent and critical remarks on lawn tennis and the men who play it without some reference to the last challenge round for the Davis Cup, in which I represented the victorious Australasian team against the British Isles at Sydney last January.

MR. W. T. TILDEN.

The match with Colonel Kingscote was much the same as the one we contested at Wimbledon a few months previously, except that the third set was a very close call for me. My service always got me to the net, and Kingscote's service was again none too strong, which, by taking on the rise, half-way between the service line and base line, enabled me to get to the net, despite the sticky court. One usually drove down Kingscote's backhand line, then crossed the other return to the same place, and up to the net ready to volley.

Arthur Lowe played very well in these matches. In form the old Oxonian is perhaps one of the best of the English players. I think Lowe is rather underrated in this country. Finding considerable difficulty in coping with his drive I decided to cut the ball short, get my opponent up to the net, and then drive at him or toss over his head. If I had kept on driving in the ordinary way I think he would have beaten me.

This visit of the British Isles team to Australia did an immense amount of good to the game there. The sporting spirit which prompted them to play under the most adverse weather conditions for the convenience of the spectators was greatly appreciated.

In conclusion, may I take this opportunity of thanking the great British lawn-tennis public for the excellent reception I have received at their hands, and to assure them that I do not feel half so serious on the court as they tell me my face would seem to indicate?

"A REGULAR FELLER"

by

W. Douglas Newton

I.

ILLUSTRATED BY W.R.S. STOTT

OLD MAN CHILD had heard from Simms up at the Mill that morning, and, to use his own expression, his temper had sand in it. It was not the best moment for his son Ralph to litter himself about the office. All the same, Ralph materialized.

Old Man Child pretended not to notice he was about, but, as he put it to himself, if his eyes could overlook them clothes his ears couldn't; he muttered a ripe word, which he pretended arose solely from Simms' letter, and looked up.

"Hallo, sonny," he said, "run out o' games to play?"

Ralph sat on the edge of the big banker's desk and laughed. He didn't flush under his father's sly taunt—his father thought, cynically, he was the sort o' feller who wouldn't touch up under a thing like that—and he said:—

"I ran out of games the moment I —stopped off, isn't it? from the C.P.R. Imperial No. 2, Dad."

"I'm glad you don't call me Pap, or Poppa," said Old Man Child, stoically. "There's that to be thankful fer, anyhow."

Again his son laughed, and did not blush —laughed not outright and heartily, but in the quiet tittering manner he had got at his English University.

"This isn't one of your sunny days, is it, Dad?"

"Sunny—oh, heck," said Old Man Child, thinking of Simms' letter. "No, this is a thirty-below day with me—you'll understand if I sorter freezes you out o' the office, see."

The young man, a big young man, a too beautiful young man for his father, got off the desk at once.

"Right-o," he said, in his too easy and cheery way. "Then you haven't any work for me?"

Perhaps Simms' letter had made Old Man Child more bitter than he knew. Certainly, as his son spoke, he thought of the Mill and felt that if his son had been anything of the man he himself had been in his young days, he'd be just the feller to clear up that mess. And as his mind felt that emotion, his eyes rested on his son's clothes, those beautiful English clothes *and* their creases.

"You'll be heartbroken to learn as I haven't any work," he said, with irony. Then, catching his son's eyes, and they were steady and candid eyes of a light blue that one would call steel-blue in a man of grit, he tempered his bitterness by adding, "Not work of your kind, anyhow."

The young man's eyes held him for a moment, then the pleasant face broke into its inevitable smile. Instead of leaving the office of a busy and irritable man, as he had tactfully meant to do, Ralph returned to the desk.

"And what work is my kind, do you think, Dad?" he asked.

As he came up his father saw his sunset-tinted vest (the thing Ralph called a waistcoat, in his English way) and his pretty silk shirt, and his tie that matched everything he had on, including the socks, and his bitterness at the spoiling of a good lad by them soft English namby-pamby schools blazed up again. He drawled dryly:—

"Your sort o' work—oh, President of the Golf Talking Federation, with a lady stenographer to do the work, or a Travelling Sample of the University Manner—som'thin' o' that sort o' thing."

Again Ralph did not blush, as a decent man should at the thrust; he smiled in his too amiable way once more, and he said:—

"Oh, those jobs—competition must be keen for them. There must be a waiting list as long as your arm for plums of that sort. Meanwhile, from the tone in your voice, I take it you have lesser jobs."

"Oh, there's real work, sure 'nuff," the old man grinned hardly.

"Work is the word I have been mentioning to you for the past week," said Ralph, in his man-of-the-world cheerfulness.

"This is work for *men*," said Old Man Child, his eyes fixed on those dandy clothes, on the sleek, pink, well-washed face of his son. Why had he given way to the mother when she was alive and sent the boy to England for all those good years

to spoil and make into a thing like this—a Nancy?

"And this work for men, is what?" asked Ralph, still taking the matter with a good deal of amusement, so that his father thought he was being superior, and became even more bitter. He picked up the letter from Simms, and said, with a rasp in his voice:—

"There'd be, f'instance, a job fer a man, a real man, up at th' Mill. If I had th' real thing about I'd put him in place of the half a human I've got managing that Mill and camp just now. That half a human is known as Simms. He thinks he's managing for me there. He ain't. He's bein' managed hisself. A camp full of toughs are running the show for him—my show. They call their selves loggers. They would be loggers with a red-meat feller over 'em, but now they're wasters. Just that. They are wasting time, they're wasting wood, they're running amok with their work. They ain't producing up to contract, an' what they do produce is bad, scamped—flawed wood, badly-chosen poles, badly 'fallen' trees. That's what is happening up at my Mill, because I've got half a human being in charge, and I can't replace him with the real goods."

Old Man Child had let himself go; he had recited the whole of the facts because he was angry and disappointed. He stopped and scowled across the disturbing letter into space, thinking of the things he would do to those toughs himself if he were only younger, if, even now, he could only spare the time from the many interests he controlled. And as he scowled in impotence he was startled to hear his son say, still cheerfully, lightly:—

"Wouldn't the idea of my going up to the Mill to replace that half a human appeal to you?"

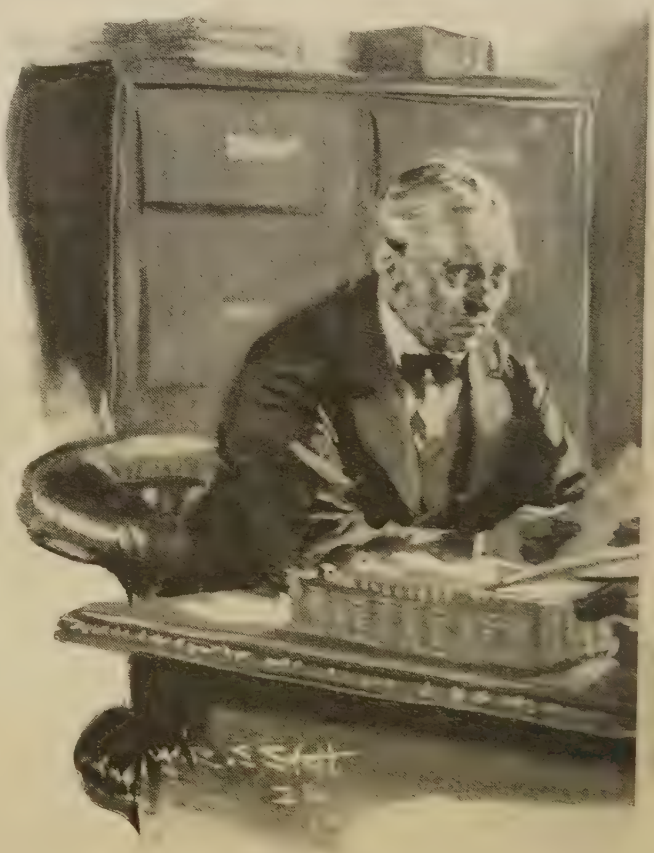
He stared at the youngster. But his eyes caught those perfect creases. Ralph was talking through his hat. Simply because he didn't *know* anything, because he thought that as the son of his father he would be bowed and scraped to, he talked like that.

"These loggers are large, rough men," he said, satirically. "They hit people. That's why Simms is water before 'em. They're men, my boy, toughs."

"Is Simms any larger than I am?" asked his son.

"Oh, you're large enough," said his father, in disgust. "Only these chaps are fighters. Fellers with hard fists, an' quick at usin' 'em."

"Oh, I used my fists a little at school and Oxford myself," said Ralph. And the old man felt sick with him.



"'Hallo, sonny,' said Old Man Child, 'run out o' games and laughed. He didn't flush

"Glove flappin'," he snorted, contemptuously. "This is real painful." Why wouldn't the boy talk sense? Why wouldn't he understand he was in a man's world now, not lolling round with his cissy little schoolboy chums? And as he felt this the glowering old man began to feel that perhaps it wouldn't be a bad thing to send the young pup up to such a place as the Mill. It would "learn him" something. It'd knock the girlish nonsense out of him, it would take the crease out of those beautiful pants (Ralph called 'em "trousers").

It might, after all, cure him, make a man of him.

"All the same," Ralph was saying in his ignorance, "I'm not the delicate flower you seem to think I am."

"And what do you know about logging?" snapped his father. Really, it might be

to play?' Ralph sat on the edge of the big banker's desk under his father's sly taunt."

painful, but a spell with those toughs at the Mill might do the kid good. "Simms is a rabbit, but he do know about trees and timber. You—you ain't learnt anything worth having, only about Greek and H. G. Wells."

"There's that, of course," smiled Ralph, without showing offence, as a spirited man should. "But there's such a thing as learning; why not give me the chance to learn?"

"The way men learn logging is from the bottom up."

"That seems sensible," grinned Ralph, and that grin drove Old Man Child further than he intended.

"An' learning, not as the son of the boss, where hands'd fawn on him an' keep things from him, but as a hired man."

"That," said Ralph, casually, "is quite sound."

"Roughin' it in a shack. Taking the hard with the soft, putting up with men who ain't been to Oxford University, and don't act like it. Being just a low, common hand."

"I gathered that at first," said Ralph.

"If I give you a letter to Simms—no more, he'd take you on."

"That's practical," said Ralph. "Will you write it now?"

And Old Man Child, half in anger, half in surprise, wrote it.

II.

RALPH dawned upon Child's Mill at an unpropitious moment. There was a certain liveliness in the air. Simms, spurred on by some dynamic conversation over the long-distance wire with Old Man Child, had been endeavouring to exert his authority and bring an end to "the mess" at the Mill. That had moved the loggers to sturdy anger, and it hadn't improved Simms' temper either. He didn't feel happier when the boss, who had been bullying him into things he hated doing, sent him along a young greenhorn, Ralph Steggles (Ralph and his father had agreed that it would be better for all concerned if his identity was completely suppressed), who was to be given a job. Simms wasn't friendly to Old Man Child or anybody he sent, and he also had a faint feeling that this smiling, yet soft-looking, young man, coming, as he did, from the boss, might prove dangerous to him.

He sent Ralph up on the light railway to the shacks of the camp, and telephoned to the logger in charge that Old Man Child had shoved a Nancy looking for a soft job upon them. The logger replied that he felt competent to provide just the sort of job a Nancy needed most.

When Ralph arrived at the dining-shack, just about supper-time, the chief logger introduced him, per information in the letter to Simms, as a new chum, out from England to make his fortune.

"Our chief nurse, Sulky Jock, is not with us fer a day or two," he said to Ralph. "He is away or absent by to or for a

vacation, joy-time, or jagg down at the Metropolitan town, or capital city, of Okanagan. As he cannot take your young mind in hand, I places you in the tender charge of our under-nurse, Husky Bill."

"Come off that, Foxy," snarled a scowling and massive man in the corner. "I'll take none o' that from you. An' I'll take no greenhorns, neither; plant him on someone soft."

"All right, Husky," said Foxy, and Ralph noted for future use that his name had been given him for good purpose, for he obviously cringed before the big, scowling brute in the corner; that meant he owed his position to low cunning rather than to his grit. "All right, Husky, but I can't help meself, see. You has the only shack with a spare bunk in it. Must bunk him somewhere. No other place but your shack, see. Can't help meself."

"Bunk him anywhere you like," snarled the big man, with fury. "I don't care if you put him with me or not. Only for God's sake don't make a voodville song and dance outter it."

The rest of the evening, before turning in, was spent in rather a tense atmosphere. The men were obviously surly and angry. Over the astonishing loggers' supper, which began with clam-chowder, a delicious soup made with cream, though it was served in preserved meat cans with the advertisement labels still on them, to the inevitable open "pies" and fruit jelly and dessert of fine Okanagan peaches, apples, pears, and plums, the men kept up a continuous growl over their grievances. Ralph gathered that Simms had made an effort to ginger things up, and the fact that Old Man Child wanted them to work hard instead of slack appeared to the men to be an unwarrantable attack on their honour and their rights.

"An' what do you think o' this sort o' adjectival treatment?" an angry man asked Ralph.

"Nothing," said Ralph, smiling, and in the pause that followed this apparently inimical remark, "I sha'n't start thinking about it until I've had some experience and know whether such treatment is deserved, or isn't."

His remark was greeted with scowls, and for the rest of the evening he was left to himself to read American magazines. Retiring, he followed Husky Bill and two other men to the four-bunk shack where he was to sleep. The men got ready for bed without speaking until, abruptly, Husky, who had been looking darkly at Ralph all the evening, growled out:—

"So ye've come all the way acrost the water ter give us th' benefit o' yer distinguished presence, hey? Goin' to learn us how ter do things in a nice, pretty English way, hey?"

"Not quite," said Ralph, cheerfully. "I've come along to do a little learning myself, as well as earning. Though, of course, there are some things you might pick up with benefit."

Big Husky Bill stared at the youngster in a pause of surprise, then he said:—

"Oh, are there—such as——?"

"Good manners," said Ralph, with smiling calm. There was a very palpable silence after that. The two other men in the shack turned and stared in pitying wonder at this silly young greenhorn who had 'sassed" Husky Bill. Husky Bill, himself, was so taken aback by the suicidal folly of the brainless young Englishman, that for the moment he was struck dumb. In that moment he felt that it would be taking advantage of innocence and childhood to respond in the usual way to such an impertinence. He glowered at the fool, and merely took his pipe out of his mouth, and snarled:—

"Th' first thing you gotter learn, anyhow, is to keep that silly mouth shut, see? As you don't know anythin', I just warns yer, the next time you gets English will be painful ter yer."

Ralph continued to smile, a smile that stimulated Husky Bill's wrath, but he said nothing further and climbed into his bunk. In his innocence he, no doubt, thought no more of the matter until, going to the dining-shack for breakfast next morning, one of the other men who bunked with him said in a whisper:—

"Look here, you're a new chum, take my advice. Don't you get fresh with Husky Bill, he's an ugly feller."

"You mean by nature as well as by face?" said Ralph, sweetly.

The other man glanced at him sourly.

"That's th' sort of chin stuff you've gotter drop if you want ter remain healthy," he advised. "Husky Bill is a man-breaker. *The* man-breaker in this outfit, barring only Sulky Jock."

"I'll make a note of it," said Ralph.

IF he did it must have been a note too easily erased from his mind. There was a certain freshness in the air between him and Husky Bill no later than the middle of the forenoon.

Ralph had been put on the donkey engine. The donkey engine stood in the middle of the "slashings"—the branches and splinters of fallen trees that littered the cleared ground of the forest. From the drum of the donkey engine a steel rope passed up and through a pulley lashed to the top of a very tall tree that, cleared of branches, was used as

a derrick. From the pulley the steel rope went down into the heart of the forest, where loggers, among them Husky Bill, secured it round the prone trunks the cutters had "fallen."

At the signal from a whistle Ralph started the donkey engine, hauling in the rope; and the great logs, two at a time, came jerking and writhing out of the woods at the end of the cable, the lifting height of the tall tree causing them to leap and bound over obstacles in an uncannily alive fashion. When the logs caught in a bush or a tree stump, or when anything untoward happened, the whistle sounded again, and Ralph stopped the engine until the obstacle, or whatever it was, was dealt with. Again, when the logs had been brought to the foot of the tall tree, a man stationed there whistled, and Ralph, reversing the engine, let the great trunks drop, to be unshackled and hitched to other ropes that hauled them up to another part of the clearing, where they were loaded on the trucks of the light railway.

As work went it was monotonous but simple, and Ralph very quickly picked up the few tricks which made his handling of the logs easy. For hours the work went smoothly, but towards the middle of the forenoon, when all were working a little slackly, things began to go wrong. The logs continually caught in obstacles, and they even slipped out of the shackling and fell into awkward positions. These mishaps increased as time went on, to a general fraying of tempers.

HUSKY BILL, who had started his day in a bad temper, was the man who got most out of control. As he had a likely butt in Ralph, it was this new-comer who received his very hearty and bitter blame. It was this raspy greenhorn who was the cause of all the trouble. It was this swab handling his donkey-engine so clumsily who was giving them all the work. He howled his curses out of the woods at Ralph. Why couldn't Ralph watch what he was vermilion well doing? What did Ralph mean by handling his "donkey" like a hoof-handed clerk?

Ralph said nothing at all; he worked his "donkey" and watched the logs and the swing of the logs with concentrated care. Then, when, in a howl of profanity which Husky Bill directed exclusively at him, two great logs came down in some way when only half across the clearing, he shut off steam, hopped down from the donkey, and strolled across to the troublesome logs. He arrived there before Husky Bill, beside himself with rage, got to them, and his eyes went over them quickly.

"Thought so," he said, to the loggers as they came up. "Who put on that shackling?"

"Who put on that shackling?" mouthed Husky Bill. "Look here, you beat it, you half-baked piece o' dough. I've had just more'n enough o' you."

"Oh, *you* put it on?" said Ralph, still easy and smiling. "I guessed as much."

"An' if I did?" snarled Husky Bill, drawing towards the young man and looking particularly ugly. "An' if I did, what then?"

"Then you're the man who's been wasting all our time," said Ralph. "You're shackling these logs anyhow—and, of course, that means trouble."

"Trouble," said Husky. "Oh, it do mean that, do it? An' you think I ain't doin' my work proper, me little lily-gill greenhorn?"

"Not at all; I *know* you're not doing it properly," said Ralph, with his undiminished smile. "I know that you're both lazy and a slacker, and you're spoiling the work of half-a-dozen men because you haven't the guts to do a good job yourself."

Not merely Husky Bill, but all the men round, gasped at the smiling—and idiotic—folly of the tenderfoot. Husky Bill stared, then put down his logging spike solemnly.

"This must be me morning for spoiling things," he snarled ironically. With a quick sharp step he was on top of Ralph.

And then he was sitting heavily in the wood-litter, wondering how accidents came to happen.

He did not quite know what had occurred. Those about did not quite know, in fact. Husky Bill, who had broken up more real men—except Sulky Jock—than anyone in the camp, had jumped on the soft-looking greenhorn, his fists swinging, his intention slaughterous. The two men had come together in a bunch, there had been a movement, lightning-swift, then Husky Bill had curved outward and backward, and had come down bump on the scattered floor of the clearing.

And the greenhorn stood there unhurt, still wearing his cheery smile.

Husky Bill rose with a bewildered air. His eyes lighted on the greenhorn, and alertness and rage woke in him at once.

"If you think that slipping on a bit of slashings wins a fight——" he began, in answer to that calm smile.

"I don't," said Ralph. "I know exactly what happened to you—you apparently don't. Why argue, friend Husky? This is the time for action."

Husky Bill jumped again, but this time he was more wary. He mixed his dash with brains, so he thought. He did not merely punch to stun, there was something

of a guard in his stance. Ralph slipped under the punch, slipped under the guard. He was in through the big man's defences with an almost contemptuous casualness. His two arms flicked in and out, short hammer-stroke punches. The right took Husky Bill's ribs where they curved, and with a grunt Husky hinged forward. With delightful precision the left took up the job and rose with the snap of a whip to Husky's chin. Husky once more knew the companionship of the slashings.

The men around were too startled to shout encouragement one way or the other. They were too bewildered to gather what the extraordinary display meant. To them the downfall of Husky had been the result of a lucky trick. Husky had not rid himself of that idea, either. He rose to show that happy accidents do not prevent, but merely put off, the slaughter of greenhorns.

He came on a little more elaborately, his attitude showing rugged determination to end this foolery once and for all. He crouched, covering up, and began to swing at Ralph. He swung quite half-a-dozen guaranteed man-stunning blows. Ralph made very little fuss about them. He moved very little—but each of those blows missed. Then choosing his own opportunity, he stepped—no, strolled—right through Husky's guard, and his left arm straightened "flick." Husky went down with such force that his body gathered an accumulation of slashings about its shoulders as it slid along the ground. And he lay still. There was no help for it. That knock-out blow had been accurately and perfectly timed.

"'You ain't asking fer a picnic, let me tell you, chum. You're walking slap inter trouble.'"

He came to consciousness one hundred and two seconds later, but did not feel fit to employ his feet in their legitimate office for at least thirty minutes more. When he did feel stout enough to walk, he rose groggily and went across the clearing to the shacks. He had had enough for the day, any other work after that series of punches would be overtime, if not blackleg labour.

But nobody noticed his going, or rather, everybody noticed his absence. There had come a new steadiness, a new serenity in the work. The man who had warned Ralph not to be fresh, and whose name was Arty, took Husky's place in charge of the shackling, and from that moment it became apparent that the work was being well done. There were no more stoppages through botched work, and, what is more, the jobs were got through much more quickly, so that the

output was doubled. Moreover, the men themselves became better-tempered. Slacking didn't suit these energetic fellows; they lost the discontent which idleness had engendered—and usually does engender.

Altogether it was a very illuminating morning for Ralph. He began to see where lay the trouble that was disturbing his father. Its seed lay in men like Husky Bill, who, slouchers themselves, forced others to slack because they were big, dangerous, and bullying.

III.

AFTER the huge and appetizing midday meal that the Belgian *chef* served in the shack, Ralph had a chat with the man Arty Griffin. He had been friendly in the morning, now he was more than friendly. Ralph found him a quiet and genuine fellow, and liked him. He found that, being a true Canadian born, Arty didn't talk about "Englishmen"; that slightly contemptuous manner was reserved for Husky and his sort, who weren't Canadians at all, but only emigrants of a few years' standing. In addition to liking Arty, Ralph had seen with his own eyes that Arty was a logger of real skill. He wanted to talk about that, but first Arty said:—

"You gave me the shock of me life when you laid Husky out. What th' hell do you call that sort of trick?"

"What do you call it, chum?"

"I'd a called it fighting, only——".

"Well, just call it fighting now, in spite of that 'only,'" said Ralph, cheerfully. "Perhaps you mixed up fighting with unskilled scrapping, which it isn't. That was the real thing, or a sample of it. In England they don't altogether neglect the arts of manhood. And that's enough about me. What I want to know about you is, why you weren't in charge of that shackling from the beginning, instead of Husky, who is lazy and hasn't half your skill?"

'That's too easy," said Arty. "Item one, I can't lay out Foxy as you laid out Husky. Item two, I don't care to be a partner in his low tricks—Husky and Sulky Jock is the experts in both them items."

"That's the way the wind blows?" said Ralph. Certainly his coming to the Mill was educative and valuable. "And Simms don't sack Foxy, who is incompetent, because——?"

"Becos Simms is another Foxy, only higher up, see." Arty's anger carried him away. "They're low trash both of 'em. Simms is feathering his nest all right, all right; so's Foxy. They both play into each other's hands, and are making pickings outter this Mill. I don't mind Old Man Child being fooled, that's his funeral, though I've heard he's a white 'un. What gets my gall is that the rest o' us men has to suffer. We gets brutes like Foxy and Husky, an' worst o' all, Sulky Jock, put over us, snaffling the plums, an' making life hell fer us. That's the reason this isn't the happy crowd it ought ter be. Somethin' ought ter be done."

"Quite," said Ralph, cheerily, "and we'll do it." Arty looked at him with both friendliness and dismay mingled. He said:—

"You ain't asking fer a picnic, let me tell you, chum. You're walking slap inter trouble. Look here, don't monkey with Sulky Jock: he ain't the same sort o' goods as Husky. He's a big, ugly man-killer. Don't you get on his queer side; he's real dangerous. Husky isn't in the same class with him."

"Oh, well," said Ralph, "I don't believe in meeting trouble until it arrives. We'll wait until Sulky returns from his vacation or jagg."

AS the men returned to work that afternoon Ralph gained another insight into the methods of the Mill's management. Foxy sidled up to him. Foxy had heard all about the downfall of Husky, and meant to find out whether this young man, who looked as though he might develop importance, was an ally or a foe. Deliberately he singled Ralph out when all the men were about. If Ralph was going to be popular, then it was best to get him into the Simms-Foxy *régime* at once. If he was going to be unpopular, then the suggestion Foxy had to make would speed up that unpopularity. The suggestion Foxy made was that Ralph, the new-comer, should take charge of the men shackling and hauling logs in Husky's place. All the loggers stood round, probably angry, but silent as they waited for Ralph's answer.

"When I know as much and have worked as long at the job as these chaps here, I'll think about it," said Ralph, tartly. "I should suggest that you should put somebody who knows the work, not a greenhorn like me in charge. Oh! you don't like my tone? Well, if it comes to that, I don't like anything about *you*." Ralph had seen that this was a good chance for him, too, and he hadn't minced matters. He declared war on the Simms-Foxy combination right there. Certainly he made Foxy and Simms his enemies at once, but Foxy had no alternative but to put Arty in charge. That was good for the work, even if it hadn't pleased the loggers, and made them recognize that Ralph himself was "white." Certainly Ralph was going to be popular—but not in the way Foxy and Simms would like. Ralph himself recognized the position and that night dropped a line to his father.

A wise step, for later, when Simms rang up Old Man Child saying that he wanted to fire that feller Steggles because he was making trouble, he was told bluntly that Steggles remained on at the Mill or Old Man Child would know the reason why.

The trouble, of course, came about on the return of Sulky Jock. Sulky Jock not only returned from his joy-time in a vile temper, but he was also informed by his crony Simms of the way the greenhorn Steggles was upsetting things at the camp, and how Sulky Jock's power for idleness was being undermined. Sulky Jock was not a brilliant thinker, but within his limitations he knew that the best way to strike terror was to apply his brutal strength in swift and smashing action. And he applied this plan on the whole, quite brilliantly.

HE appeared suddenly and unannounced in the dining-shack after his talk with Simms. He glanced round the room with that sullen and ugly rage that gave him his nickname, and with a quick movement was beside the chair where Ralph sat reading a magazine.

"What's a swab of a greenhorn doin' in my pertickler seat?" he roared. "Git outter it, you pup." His huge hands plucked Ralph from the chair, and with tremendous strength he flung the young man across the shack.

There was no uproar. The loggers knew exactly what was happening. Sulky was here to put that greenhorn in his place without loss of time. They were sorry for the young Englishman, because he had the makings of a "regular feller," but facts were facts, and had to be faced. Sulky was undoubtedly here to break him up. The loggers backed against the walls silently, pushing the tables and chairs back.

Sulky stood, huge and truculent, glaring at the fallen man, his hands dropped but ready; not really on the alert, because he was confident in his gorilla strength and in the fact that his whirlwind assault, coupled with his ferocity, had already put the fear of death into the soft heart of the greenhorn. Ralph lay on the floor for thirty seconds staring, apparently with astonishment, at Sulky. Then he rose with curious slowness, and that manner of rising told Sulky that his method had been correct. The fight was finished, he'd knocked the heart out of the cub.

And as his heart glowed under that thought his head clicked back with such force that only the vertebræ seemed to save it from falling off his shoulders; he staggered backward, a tree-trunk seemed to hit him just under his ear, and his big body fetched up with such a clump on the shack walls that the whole building shook.

What had happened? The slowly-rising greenhorn had abruptly changed into a streak of lightning. He had come across the shack in one flash even before he had risen fully to his feet, it seemed. Caught napping in his moment of self-confidence, Sulky had been not only unready but practically unaware of the terrific left and right that had shaken him to his spine. And in any case he had never encountered anything equal to the tearing, bewildering, tornado-like swiftness of the young greenhorn.

For Ralph was not the man of the Husky encounter, not the man of Simms' description. In that fight with Husky, Ralph had been casual, almost indolent; he had walked through Husky's guard with an almost languid unconcern. Now he was unchained lightning. His swiftness and power were appalling. There was no playing at the game of fighting now. He had measured the brutal strength of Sulky, and was not going to leave anything to chance. Sulky was a natural fighting animal, if an unskilled one, and as such was dangerous. If he got a chance——

Ralph never gave him a chance. Sulky heaved himself away from the shack wall, and turned with a bellow on Ralph. Ralph was in at once, both fists banging at the great head, both fists clip-clopping at the great body that had just been indulged to excess. And then Ralph was out. He was in and out in the swing of Sulky's arm. By the time that giant hand had reached the end of its stroke, the greenhorn was so far out of danger that the loggers let out a gale of laughter at the wildness of the miss. Their laughter changed to a shout as Ralph swept in on his man, and before Sulky could recover from his swing had jabbed a cruel left on to the exposed jaw.

From his own momentum, from the stinging force of that blow, Sulky went down with a crash. He was on his feet at once—foolishly, for Ralph was at him like a tiger, and a stream of snapping, stinging punches from every angle battered his face, knocking the spirit out of his ill-used body. Sulky, dazed, rocked on his feet, tried to guard his face with crooked, ill-placed arms. A flush hit on the solar-plexus, from which his clothes took the knock-out sting, doubled him up. He flung out his hands, not to fight, but to claw hold of this will-o'-the-wisp who punched like a battering-ram. The awful punches came in again, left, left, right, left, right, and his battered head kicked sideways with the nervelessness of a doll's under the swinging smash of each hit. And then he committed his last folly—he rushed at Ralph. He charged at the greenhorn like

"Ralph was at him like a tiger, and a stream of snapping, stinging punches from every angle battered his face, knocking the spirit out of his ill-used body."

a great bull, his hands anyhow in his anger and fear—and Ralph did not run away. He charged in, too. His arm went out in an awful straight left, and it took Sulky on the jaw with terrible impact and timing. Sulky disappeared in a wild crash under one of the tables, and remained there. As a matter of fact, it took him a full five minutes to recover consciousness.

SOMETHING like a minor riot broke out then, for all the men had felt the weight of Sulky's bullying and showed elation, but in the middle of the cheering Foxy made a fool of himself. Terrified for his position, he rushed at Ralph (who, he thought, must be exhausted), yelling :—

"Look here, I won't have this. Creating a disturbance—dangerous element. See here, you quit this camp. You hear me, quit: you're fired."

He advanced on Ralph with ready hands, and Ralph hit him. He was neither as heavy nor as skilled as Husky or Sulky, and the punch Ralph landed span him along the floor until he fetched up against the legs of some of the loggers, who kicked him back into the middle of the room; there, after an attempt to rise, and a sudden better thinking about that act, he lay scowling at Ralph. And Ralph said to him :—

"I don't like your ways, and I don't like the ways of any of the 'rough-house' brutes who do your dirty jobs, and by Gad I'm going to change 'em, if I have to break up Sulky and Husky and you every day of my life. And as for my quitting—you go and talk that over with Old Man Child. See what he says. And when you've heard what he says, come back and argue it out with me again—I'll be ready for you."

It was after this that Simms had his long-distance talk with Old Man Child about the man Steggles, and got, as he said, "a flea in his ear" for his pains. After hearing that Steggles was to remain, Foxy, Sulky, and Husky decided that they would not. They decided it would not be healthy.

IV.

TWO months later Ralph again sat on the edge of his father's desk, and he was smiling with unaltered cheeriness, though he looked browner and harder. Now, however, Old Man Child saw the smile with a different eye. He was saying, with something of a chuckle in his voice :—

"This Arty Griffin you got me to put in place o' Simms when I fired him, also thanks to you, writes me the best report I have had o' the Mill in years. Everything is going along in real proper shape; he's pleased—an' so'm I. He's a real good man. But, an' here's the point I want ye to attend to, he wants to propose a real good man as assistant manager. The increased work calls for an assistant, as I agree, an' he wishes to put forward the name of a regular feller, hard worker, popular with the men, an' one who has done even more than he, Arty, himself, in getting the Mill an' camp into a proper healthy state. The 'regular feller' he proposes is a certain Ralph Steggles."

"That's like old Arty," Ralph grinned; "but he must have written that report before I decided to come away, before I told him and the rest who I was."

"Oh," said Old Man Child, lifting his rugged brows. "So you told them who you were. And did it make any difference?"

"Not the slightest—you see, they're 'regular fellers,' too, the lot we've got there now."

Old Man Child, who had been bursting with curiosity, could contain himself no longer.

"Look here, son, how *did* you do it? Oh, I've heard things from this Arty and from others. I've heard about Husky and that big brute Sulky Jock, an' all that. How did you break up them big, rough-house, all-fire dangerous men?"

"Oh, that—because they were just rough-house men, that an' nothing else. I admit that if I had 'rough-housed' with them they'd have made very short work of me, so I did it scientifically, and they didn't. Since you sent me to England to obtain the best education money could buy, I bought the best scientific advice I could in 'rough-house' stuff. I became rather an expert over there, because, I suppose, I had a natural liking for it. I imagine it's in the blood. If what I hear about the early days of a certain would-be grumpy Old Man——"

"Umm," grunted Old Man Child, trying not to chuckle. "We'll leave *that* at that, though I'm not saying that the grumpy old feller you refer to didn't have a nateral turn or aptertude fer making hay of toughs when they were uppish. All the same, son, you're good stuff, an' I takes back that bitter talk I give you—that talk where I hinted or suggested you weren't a real man."

"The clothes misled you, Dad, and the English drawl. It does a lot of people. But we're all the same underneath, if we're 'regular fellers.' And I say, going back to that talk, I've got to ask you the same thing. I guess I'm through with the Mill—have you any work for me?"

"Have I any—have I any work fer you? I've got it *all* fer you; just pull up that chair to the desk. You're going to sit down here with me and share the whole boiling now, an' now on."

THE REVIVAL OF THE PARIS CABARET

by *Sidney Dark*

THE Paris cabaret was, and is becoming again, one of the most distinctive institutions of the French capital. Just before the war there was an attempt to establish the cabaret in London. One so-called cabaret was started in a cellar off Regent Street, and another, under the patronage of Mr. Augustus John, in Soho. Both were feeble imitations of the genuine cabaret, which, to begin with, is a public entertainment, and not a private club, and which depends for its successful existence not on its possibly bizarre decorations, nor even (to use a euphemism) on the exceeding frankness of the programme, but on the genuine art of its songs and its singers.

The cabaret is not even Parisian in the full sense of the word. It belongs to Montmartre, the Bohemian hill crowned by the great church of the Sacré Cœur, the people

Photo. Henri Manuel.

M. DOMINIQUE BONNAUD.

of which look down, both actually and metaphorically, on the rest of the city. It was in Montmartre that the famous "Chat Noir" was founded thirty years ago and more by Rodolphe Salis. It was in Montmartre that the "Chat Noir" found many imitators, and where the art of the cabaret flourished and developed, producing many a genius, the best-known of whom outside Paris is, of course, Yvette Guilbert. It is in Montmartre that the cabaret and the art of the cabaret are again to be found, now that the war is over and Paris, despite appalling food prices and an exchange that gives over fifty francs for a sovereign, is once more becoming a little like herself.

The new Montmartre, however, is not quite the old Montmartre. War has left its scars on the Hill of Bohemia. I was sitting, a week or two ago, in a café in the beautiful Avenue Trudaine with one of the best-known of the Montmartre poets. "Look out of the window," he said to me, sadly, "and you will see your Milton's Paradise Lost."

To the Parisian, Paris is France. To the Montmartois, Montmartre is Paris, and the rest of the city is a foreign land. A year or two before the war a Montmartre writer, who had gained considerable success in the Paris theatres, was obliged for professional reasons to move down the hill to a flat on the boulevards. His leave-taking was tearful and almost tragic. He had his furniture packed in a hearse, which was followed through the streets by a hundred or so of his friends, dressed in deep mourning and weeping bitterly.

Although it may be true that the old order has passed in Montmartre, as elsewhere in this world, the old cabaret spirit can still be found, notably at "La Lune Rousse," in the Rue Pigalle, where the entertainment is unmarred by mere grossness and is moulded on traditional cabaret lines by three men, Dominique Bonnaud, Georges Baltha, and Lucien Boyer, who have been associated together for thirty years, and who all belonged at one time to the company of "Chat Noir" poets. In order to give English readers some idea of "La Lune Rousse" I have been trying to think of any Englishmen at all similar in talent to Bonnaud or Baltha or Boyer.

They are all three middle-aged men. They are all poets, Lucien Boyer a really distinguished poet. They are all comic singers. Bonnaud and Baltha are actors too, and Baltha is really a very droll comedian. In addition, Bonnaud and Baltha are business men who run "La Lune Rousse" themselves, and Bonnaud is a journalist who writes almost every day in one of the best-known of the Paris newspapers. Bonnaud is a portly gentleman, with glasses, who looks rather like a schoolmaster. Baltha is a little man with a heavy moustache and twinkling, laughing eyes. Lucien Boyer looks like a poet, if rather a prosperous one.

If the Montmartre cabaret could be brought across the Channel and acclimatized in London, it would be necessary for its artistes to combine the talents of the Poetry Bookshop, the Palladium, the leader-writers of the *Morning Post*, and of some astute theatrical manager like Mr. Vedrenne. And, alas! even if this were accomplished, the result would not be a bit like the real thing.

The cabaret cannot be transplanted; it cannot even be taken down the hill without dying of inanition. Fursy, who used to run the "Boîte à Fursy" at Montmartre, where Fragson sang before he returned to England, has set up his "boîte" on the boulevards with the idea of attracting an international public. The public has been attracted, but the savour has gone out of the entertainment. It has lost its note and its distinction. It has withered in a strange soil.

The very names of the cabarets suggest the fantastic mind of the men who direct them: "La Pie Qui Chante," "Les Quatz' Arts," "Le Chat Noir," "L'Ane Rouge" (once a cabaret and now a restaurant), "La Lune Rousse," and so on. It is a little difficult to find the correct translation for "La Lune Rousse," but Lucien Boyer, who speaks a little English, suggested to me "The Ginger Moon."

"The Ginger Moon" is a tiny little theatre that will hold, perhaps, three hundred people, with a tiny little stage on one side. The foyer is decorated with most admirable pictures, many of them by artists with a great Parisian reputation. The entertainment begins, as it always begins at a cabaret, with a series of songs by the three principal stars and four other men-singers. It is only very rarely that any women artistes appear in the first part of a cabaret programme. The artistes are described on the programme as "chansonniers et compositeurs." Each man sings songs the words of which he has written himself, generally set to some well-known and popular air. To secure an engagement at a cabaret the aspirant must be able to prove his ability as a verse-writer, and the verses that the cabaret demands are fanciful, audacious, and satirical comments on the events of the day. The first essential is that they shall be topical. The second essential is that they shall be humorous. The third essential is that they shall be well written. Of course, the poet must be able to sing; but, truth to tell, the cabaret-poet is not generally a very good singer. Tradition relates that years ago there was a really fine tenor singer at the "Chat Noir." His name was Gabriel Montoya, and, oddly enough, during the daytime he practised as a doctor.

The success of the cabaret absolutely depends on the fact that the public which it attracts has an intimate acquaintance with everything that is happening in the world outside, and it is just this fact that would make a cabaret hopelessly impossible in England, even if cabaret artistes could be found or trained. The ordinary man in the Paris streets reads newspapers all through, and is as interested in a political controversy in London between M. Millerand and Mr. Lloyd George as he is in the latest details of the Landru case or in a squabble between actresses in the green-room at the Théâtre Français. The Parisian is infinitely curious and his interests are eclectic. Consequently the song-writers have a wide range of subjects and they can safely rely on the intelligence and on the knowledge of their hearers.

Photo. Henri Manuel.

M. GEORGES BALTHA.

Photo. Felix.

M. LUCIEN BOYER.

There is, as a matter of fact, very real little difference between what is called a revue in London and the sort of entertainment that is produced at the large Paris theatres, such as the Casino de Paris. The London revues are better produced and rather duller. The Paris revues are wittier, much more risky, and perhaps on the whole less well played. But the distinctive French talent is to be found in the cabarets, and it is an interesting fact that the men who sing nightly in these little halls, men like Lucien Boyer and Paul Marinier, are also frequently the authors of the revues that are staged in the large theatres.

The cabaret artiste never wears evening dress. He is generally announced by the

MLLE. FRANCETTE MARTIS.

director (though this is not done at "The Ginger Moon") as "mon excellent camarade," and then he goes on the stage and sings four or five of his own songs. There is apt to be a little sameness in the programme, and it is quite common to hear during one evening two or three songs on the same subject. For the most part the appearance of the performers suggests neither poets nor singers. Fursy wears rather comic clothes that remind one of Du Maurier's Quartier Latin, but the majority of the clothes of the singers are just ordinary. One of the best of the company at "The Ginger Moon," Léon Michel, looks like a highly respectable bank clerk, and is described on the programme as "toujours content, jamais nerveux."

Lucien Boyer is unquestionably the most talented and versatile of present-day cabaret artistes. He habitually sings four or five songs each evening, caustically commenting on the Beckett-Carpentier fight, the railway strike, the greed of the English in forcing up the exchange, and so on, and between the songs he recites, amid the hush of his audience, a really fine poem which he wrote in 1916 when things, Heaven knows, were black enough for France, and in which he foretold, with French audacity, the return of the victorious "poilus" and the loud hurrahs for victory that rang from Dover to China, and at last—so insistent were the [illegible] reached the streets of heaven itself. Inquiry is made as to the cause of the insistent disturbance:—

"Seigneur, fit une voix dans les célèstes chœurs,
C'est le grand défilé des Alliés vainqueurs
Qui passe sous l'Arc de Triomphe de l'Etoile."

It required some faith to see in 1916 the victorious Allies marching under the Arc de Triomphe, and it is interesting that this faith belonged to a cabaret artiste. Another of Boyer's best poems, which he also frequently recites, is called "Les Beausoleils." A wounded French-Canadian soldier, called Beausoleil, finds himself among kinsmen belonging to the old country, and the poem finishes with a fine passage which may be roughly translated:—

They made for themselves a new France out there, but when they heard that the Kaiser was destroying the model on which they had built, the church-bells sounded the alarm, and they have come back, cousin, the Beausoleils have come back!

I quote this to show the dignity of what may be called cabaret poetry—its avoidance of clap-trap—and the curious versatility of a man who can follow the singing of a song which would certainly appal the London County Council, with a recitation of restrained and well-imagined patriotic verse.

The concluding part of the programme at "The Ginger Moon" is a wittily-written revue, acted with extraordinary skill on a

MLLE. CORA MADOU.

The foyer of "La Lune Rousse," with the three principal artistes, MM. Boyer, Bonnaud, and Baltha.

stage about the size of a billiard table. The idea of the revues, like the ideas of the songs, is topical, and they are changed very frequently. When I was in Paris "The Ginger Moon" revue was called "Dansons." Paris just now is as dancing mad as London, and the authors of the revue, in a series of very comic scenes, describe how deputies, waitresses at the Duval restaurants, Madame Bartet, the great Comédie Française actress, and finally the heroes of the Wagner operas—"Parsifal," "Tannhäuser," and "Lohengrin"—all abandon their proper *rôles* to indulge in the fox-trot. It was all very slight but it was all very clever. For the revue the male company was augmented by two ladies, and one of

them, a young woman called Francette Martis, has remarkable burlesque powers which, if she were English, would certainly make her a Gaiety star and provide her with an ambassadorial salary.

Intelligence is unquestionably the note of the cabaret, and intelligence is the outstanding characteristic of the cabaret artistes. They are good people to gossip with. They have thought about things, about art and letters and politics, and they have views, often very strong views, of their own. Their method of work is also very much their own. I lunched one day in a Montmartre café with Lucien Boyer, and he apologized for keeping me waiting while he finished writing a poem (and a capital poem it was, too) on the café table and amid the clatter made by waiters and customers.

Boyer is a man of most attractive character. He spent most of his time during the war singing to the soldiers in the French lines, and even travelling as far as Salonika on his mission of amusement. His songs, as I have said, often contain very caustic criticisms of English policy, but, like most Frenchmen, he has the greatest admiration for the English soldier both as a good comrade and a first-class fighting-man.

There is a development of the cabaret in many respects entirely unlike the original, without its particular art and atmosphere, but nevertheless essentially Parisian, which flourished in Boulevard Paris before the war and has now started again. When the cabaret comes down the hill it generally changes its name to "boîte." A "boîte," or box, is a small room, holding, with a squeeze, a hundred persons, which used, in the all-night days, to open about twelve o'clock, but which now opens between half-past nine or ten and shuts at eleven-thirty, when the Paris police rules compel all places of amusement to close their doors. Perhaps the best-known of these "boîtes" is near the Place de l'Opéra and is called "Chez Fysher." Its proprietor, A. Nilson Fysher, used to be well known in London as one of the Fysher-Farkoa duettists.

There is no entrance charge at these "boîtes," but it is the rule that at each table there shall be bought at least one bottle of champagne, sold, by the way, at the present exchange, at a very moderate price. The entertainment consists of eight or ten songs. Fysher himself sings his own very charming compositions, light French love songs, the sort of thing that Maurice Farkoa used to sing in England. The other artistes are women. One of them is a humorous Parisian gamine, audacious, extremely clever, and amazingly vivacious. The other, and from the English point of view the more interesting, is a young person called Cora Madou, who sings to the accompaniment of a guitar what may be called declamatory songs, with a dramatic fervour which would be exaggerated if it were not for the singer's genuine art.

Mademoiselle Madou is interesting because she seemed to me to emphasize what is unquestionably one of the characteristics of Paris—a characteristic obvious everywhere in the city, but most obvious where the glitter is greatest and the pursuit of amusement most insistent. Paris is a thrilling city. Life moves swiftly in her streets. She is a city of quick thought and, as I have said before, of quick intelligence. The outside world has called her the Gay City, and in a sense the title is true, but the gaiety is very superficial. Under the surface, Paris is very sad. Hers is the sadness of experience, of disillusionment, of the inability to escape facts and of the capacity to estimate facts at their true value.

There is laughter in the cabaret, but, every now and again, there is bitterness in the laughter. The cabaret poets are ironists. Their genius is as ironic as the genius of Anatole France.

It has been said that on the whole the English are the happiest people on the face of the earth, and it may be added that they are happy because they are comparatively easily deceived. The French are hard to deceive. They see through humbug and pretence. They detect the hypocrite. And because they have seen through so much humbug and because they have detected so many hypocrites, it has become a national characteristic to suspect everyone and to search for selfish motives even when an action appears most unselfish. This suspicious attitude to life and this ironic view of the world bring with them a grey atmosphere that is very evident to the acute observer of Paris life.

And this is why Mademoiselle Madou, singing her songs in the little hot room near the Place de l'Opéra, seemed to me to epitomize the Paris outside. There was champagne on the tables. The men and women in the room had dined well and all of them belonged to "le monde où l'on s'amuse." They had been more or less amused all day and they were out for the last hour's amusement at its end. The woman by the piano was singing just to supply that amusement—and in her eyes—deep set, striking eyes—there was a wealth and a depth of tragedy that only a great poet could read and put into words. And that is the real Paris! Gaiety, ironic laughter, half-hidden sentiment, realistic acceptance of facts, and, dominating it all, the undertone of sadness, occurring and re-occurring, and providing the "leit motiv" of the drama of the city.

COUNTING THE STEPS

BY

MRS BAILLIE REYNOLDS

Illustrated by S. ABBEY

"IT'S these confounded stairs that are getting on my mind. I must certainly move out of this place."

The thought mounted vaguely, through a barrier of headache, to Marshall Aylmer's brain — a brain which, a short time ago, he would certainly not have recognized as his own.

But then it was such a curious world in which he had been living ever since his demobilization!

In 1914 he had been at Oxford, reading for Honours, cresting the wave of Moderations triumphantly, and meditating nothing save the taking of Greats with the same distinction.

Then the war opened her red and dripping jaws and swallowed him. Somehow he could never foresee that, as soon as he was done with, he would be thrown up again, stranded like Jonah on a desolate shore, with nothing before him but to begin life anew in a strange world.

Meanwhile the bottom had dropped out of things. His father had been ruined by the war, and was dead. No return to Oxford for Marshall. He must earn his bread. He was not naturally a cynic, but it did strike him with a kind of pang to find out how loudly the same people who had hounded their young manhood to the war now shrieked in the Press and on public platforms that the Government should at once cease paying all these unnecessary soldier-men.

What to do? Marshall had not been bred up to be a scavenger, or he might have earned a comfortable wage. As it was, he wandered about the wealthy, crowded city, which his self-sacrifice had preserved, interviewing various sympathetic but helpless agencies, until at last he found himself installed at three pounds a week in a clerk's job, which he loathed with a loathing indescribable.

He likewise loathed cheap boarding-houses, and he therefore installed himself in a warren of small service flats in an unfashionable neighbourhood. Inferior as it was, it was more than he could afford. He knew that, as soon as his gratuity money was spent, he would have to move. But something seemed to have ceased to work in his brain—some motive power in him had gradually dwindled and finally expired during those awful empty months in which he had realized that he was nothing but an encumbrance and an anxiety to the society he had helped to save.

He drifted on. By degrees he fell into the habit of declining invitations. It was a long way back from the West-end to Caithness Chambers; and the Tube twice a day was enough, by George! It was enough!

And then there were the stairs. Ninety-four of them. If there had been a lift, doubtless the flats would have been too dear for him even to think of renting one.

When he got home of an evening, his brain tired and mushy with adding up columns—he hated figures as energetically as he hated concrete stair-treads—he had to fight the feeling that he was obliged to count each step as he went up. Every floor was exactly like the last—the same pale, mud-coloured wall, the same chocolate doors with white numbers, the same gas-jet in a wire guard—all as like as peas in a pod. The bother was

that lately he could never count the stairs to make them come twice alike.

It was a savage, sleeting March evening. Marshall had been eight months in his abhorred job, and it seemed eight years—it seemed far longer than the war—far longer than all his joyous public school and university life put together.

His pre-war overcoat was wearing thin, but the profiteers who grow rich on the life-blood of demobilized officers had prevented his purchasing a new one. The fact that he was cold helped to dull his brain this evening. The bother of it was that when his brain was dullest the curious little obsessions which his solitary life was breeding in him became most distinct.

So that, when he had gone to the very top and made it ninety-two, he must needs descend again to the very bottom and on his next upward journey count ninety-five. This so exasperated him that he went down once more, muttering to himself. His brow had now a little perpendicular furrow permanently between his earnest grey eyes. His dark hair was losing its colour—he could detect grey hairs above his temples.

"I'm being a silly rotter," he muttered, as he arrived for the last time on the ground floor. "Now, let's try once more. Whatever I make it this time I'll count it as right."

And he made it eighty-one.

However, he was not going down any more. Arithmetic be blowed! He was a classic, not a mathematician. He was going to light his gas-fire, make himself coffee out of a tin of *café au lait*, and sit down with a book and a pipe until it was time to descend to the restaurant for dinner.

"There's something malign about this whole place, and it's having a very bad effect on me," he said to himself, as he opened the narrow front door with his latch-key. "I'm going to move, if there's a vacant room in the city of London" (which, as a matter of fact, there was not—even at a premium).

THE interior furnishing of the flats was as uniform as their outside arrangement. Aylmer hung his hat upon the usual peg and walked along the usual passage to the usual door. He entered the usual room, with the usual fireplace in the usual position, the usual overmantel surmounting it. Had the overmantel been on the floor for a change, he thought it might have cheered him up. The usual table stood in the middle of the room. But a screen had been placed between the table and the door. That was not usual; and when he came round it he saw something still more daringly out of the common. For, at the farther side of the table, between it and the fireplace, was a woman, seated on a chair.

She was about his own age, he guessed, and she seemed to be in a towering rage. Her coat and skirt looked untidy and crumpled; her hair was dishevelled, as if she had lately been engaged in a rough-and-tumble. Her hat and some furs lay upon the table. She was pale and rather gaunt, with dark eyes like live coals; and she sat with her two hands down at her sides, resting on the seat of her chair. She made no movement to rise when the outraged owner walked round the screen and confronted her. She simply glared. He thought she looked as if she would bite.

In fact, so threatening was her aspect that Aylmer, a man accustomed to be courteous to women, and feeling far too tired and used-up for strife, thought it best, in spite of the insolent intrusion, to be conciliatory; and he therefore, with an ironic smile, wished the lady "Good evening."

She sneered hatefully—almost as though purposely making herself as unattractive as possible. "Already?" said she. "I don't think they thought you would show up as soon as this."

Aylmer stood motionless. He was totally bewildered. "This is about my usual time," said he. "Do you want to see me about anything?"

"Of course, I've been simply yearning for this delightful meeting," she gibed, bitterly. Then, as if something in his aspect struck her as unexpected, she added, sharply: "I suppose you *are* Marshall, are you not?"

His face lightened. The sound of his Christian name from the lips of a girl—even so ferocious a girl as this—was uncommon enough to be pleasant. This must be some forgotten relative.

"Certainly I'm Marshall," he replied, promptly, "and, of course, I'm really no end bucked to find you here. I only don't quite understand. Would you mind telling me who you are?"

"Oh, cut it out!" she cried, raging at him. "What is the good of playing the goat like this?"

Aylmer was now so thoroughly puzzled that a hateful suspicion crept into his mind, sending a cold shiver down his spine. Those stairs—this female—could he be going mad? An alternative, hardly less unpleasant, presented itself. He guessed that he might be the victim of a practical joke. He knew that two young men, whose appearance and manners he had always found most distasteful, lived on his staircase. They had made overtures to acquaintance, which he had nipped in the bud. Doubtless they had written a note in his name, to invite this

young woman to his rooms. But how had she got in?

"You are evidently making a mistake of some kind," he said, as steadily as he could. "I have made no appointment with anyone, and I do not know who you are, nor why you are here. I think it may be better if you leave at once."

"So do I," she replied, grimly. "As you know, I shouldn't have come if I could have helped it. But I do wish I understood the object of this play-acting on your part."

"Play-acting!" he echoed, wrathfully. "I wish I knew what you are talking about! I walk in to find a strange female seated on my hearth, and when I ask to have the situation explained, she tells me to cut it out!" He folded the screen and set it back against the wall. "There's the door. If you want to go, why not go? I assure you I won't hinder you."

She still made no least motion to rise from the chair to which she seemed to be rooted. "You won't hinder?" she said, slowly. "No, you get other people to do the hindering for you, don't you? Oh, I think you are a perfect brute! Isn't it enough to have me here at your mercy like this, without mocking me?"

Tears of rage gathered in her stormy eyes, but she was too proud to weep. She kept a stiff upper lip, though two drops were rolling down either side of her well-cut nose.

Aylmer grew angrier and angrier; and anger seemed to be having the effect of clearing his brain. He no longer thought about the number of the stairs—he was secretly wishing that this eccentric visitor would or could give a plausible explanation of her presence in his flat.

"Mock you?" he echoed, leaning his fists on the table and facing her squarely. "Somebody's mocking all right, but it isn't me. Well, I've asked you to go, and you decline; and I've asked you to say who you are, and you won't. I gather that you insist upon foisting your company on me, so I'd better make some coffee. I think there are two cups." As he spoke he went to the cupboard beside the fireplace and flung it open. Then he jumped. It was usually in perfect order, but now somebody had made hay there. He could see no cups, no *café au lait*, no biscuit-box. A mass of tobacco-tins, tattered magazines, and old newspapers confronted him. He stood motionless, passing his hand over his forehead.

"So I am really going mad!" he muttered aloud. "There isn't a girl in that chair at all—there isn't a cup in the cupboard. I'm dreaming!"

"Or drunk!" cried the girl in the chair, defiantly. "Why, of course, that's it! Thank the fates, that may give me a chance!"

He was now standing close by her, and she turned to him a face so altered that he hardly knew it. Sudden spots of colour burned in her cheeks, her eyes glittered strangely. "Be a pal," said she, coaxingly; "let's put off talking about unpleasant things! Take me out somewhere for a bit of dinner—that's a dear chap."

She spoke still without the least change of posture, but with her body slightly twisted, so that she looked over her shoulder; and the result was so seductive that horror seized the honest soul of Marshall Aylmer.

"Go!" he cried, loudly. "Out with you, I say, at once! If you are a real woman, get up from that chair and clear!" And, as she made no movement to obey, he went behind her and tipped the chair smartly to make her arise.

To his horror, she fell on her knees, her hands remaining as before, clutching the two uprights of the back of her chair, just above the seat, and he perceived, with unspeakable amazement, that she was tied by both wrists with silk handkerchiefs. Bending over her, he was compelled to put his arms right round her to draw her back to a perpendicular posture; and thus made the further discovery that both her ankles were likewise secured to the chair-legs.

"Why, what on earth!" he gasped. She said nothing at all. "Mad or sane, drunk or sober, I'm going to untie you," he panted.

With mutterings of wrath and mystification, he proceeded to unfasten the intricate knots, his indignation almost choking him as he saw that she had been secured so tightly that she must have been suffering actual pain during their interview. Her feet and ankles seemed to him pitifully small. He set himself to chafe them gently. Presently she gave a weary sigh.

"That's good," said she. "You've done a better day's work for yourself than you know. If you had been merciless, I would have fought you inch by inch. But now I'm not so sure. I think we may come to some kind of an agreement."

AYLMER stood staring at her, his whole being in tumult. He violently resented her tone—the tone in which one humours a drunken man. She was evidently a temptress; yet she could not have tied herself hand and foot to a chair. He recurred to the practical joke theory. It seemed the most probable; in fact, the only conceivable. It made him furious, for it meant that he must get rid of her at once; and the past ten minutes had been distinctly stimulating. However, there was no help for it. He must put her outside the door forthwith, before the perpetrators of the joke called to see how it was working out.

He took out his watch. "Sorry not to have time to discuss it now," said he. "Fact is, I have an appointment to keep in half an hour, and got to change first. So if you'll run along at once——"

She laid her red, swelled hands upon the table and dragged herself to her feet. Then she shook her head. "Sorry," said she, "I'm afraid I must wait a few minutes—I couldn't get downstairs yet."

Then her face changed. It seemed suddenly to dawn upon her that the man was more drunk than she had supposed—that he did actually mean to let her go. There swept into her singularly changeful face a look of exhilaration and delight. She snatched her hat shakily, pinned it on anyhow—but the effect was quite good—and picked up her furs.

"Yes," she murmured, soothingly, her eyes fixed warily on his, "I see what you mean. I'll wait outside for you—you change—and follow me, won't you?" She smiled enticingly, moving with a hobbling gesture across the room towards the door. It occurred to Aylmer that in a moment more she would have disappeared, and he would never, as long as he lived, learn the meaning of this wild episode in his blameless career. Practical joke be blowed! He moved between her and the door.

The way in which her face fell was pathetic. The hope which had kindled for a moment, making a different girl of her, sank away again.

"Before you go," he said, earnestly, "you really must tell me who you are and what you are doing here."

She gazed upon him as if she would tear out his very soul. "Oh, I *can't* understand," said she. "Isn't there some hitch somewhere? I don't believe this man is drunk at all."

"I assure you I'm not. I had a small Bass with my lunch. Nothing since."

"And you say you don't know who I am?"

"Not on your life, I don't."

"But you—you are—Marshall?"

"Certainly! And you——?"

She risked it. "I'm Lesley Gatesgarth."

"Lesley Gatesgarth?" he repeated, vaguely.

"Well, now I *know* there must be a hitch somewhere," said she. "You couldn't be so drunk that my name wouldn't recall things."

"The name," he said, meditatively, "does recall something. It strikes a chord of memory. But I never saw you before, of that I'm certain."

She subsided into a chair, to relieve her sore ankles. "And the newspapers don't help any more than that!" she murmured. "Yet I thought the one in the *Daily Mandate* was very good, myself."

HE dropped into another chair, over the back of which he scrutinized her keenly. "Jove!" he said. "You're the Missing Witness, in the Gibson jewel case?"

She nodded.

He snatched at his head with both hands. "But this makes it worse instead of better!" he shouted. "If you are Lesley Gatesgarth, what on earth, what in the name of all the powers, can you be doing in my flat?"

"Your flat?" she repeated, in astonished accents. "But I thought it was Gooch's?"

"*Gooch's!*" He leapt to his feet. "Gooch's flat!" His eyes ranged all round, and then he fairly shouted with relief. "Now the gods be praised," said he, "for I am not mad after all! I've done nothing worse than enter the wrong flat by mistake. No wonder there were only eighty-two—and that's too many—but no matter for that. Just let me understand. Am I too bold in inferring, from the evidence of these bonds, that you were being detained here against your will?"

"You are not," said the girl, shortly. Her manner was in an odd way reassuring. He felt that she was straight, after all. "But ever since you came in, I have felt as though you cannot be Marshall. Yet you say you are——"

"Marshall Aylmer," he corrected.

"Aylmer? Not the man from upstairs?" Colour burned in her cheeks. Suddenly she was eager, youthful, trusting, all her unnatural defiance gone. "You really are the man they were afraid of?" she cried. "They said Marshall would not come for an hour, because he would wait until Aylmer, 'the fool from upstairs,' had gone down to dinner. They were afraid I might scream, I suppose."

She was surprised to see him turn as white as ashes. "And—and you thought I was this—this scoundrel?" he said, thickly.

"I don't know what I thought," she sighed, and lowered her eyes.

"Well, we had better try and do a get-away before he materializes," said Aylmer, with a valiant attempt at sang-froid. "If you will trust me, I think we shall be safer upstairs in my place than anywhere; not forgetting to bolt the door, as evidently our keys fit each other's locks."

He raised her to her feet. "Lean on me," said he, curtly; and piloted her along the passage, where now he noted various differences, and was surprised they should have escaped him when entering.

"The dinner-bell hasn't sounded yet," he said, "so we have time. But be very quiet."

The door of the upper flat once fast behind them with shot bolts, Miss Gatesgarth displayed some embarrassment.

"I'm afraid that was a stupid move," said she. "We had better have walked

"'Go!' he cried, loudly. 'Out with you, at once!'"

calmly downstairs. They wouldn't have dared to stop us."

"I'm not so sure—it depends upon how desperate they are," he replied. "These stairs are pretty lonely as a rule. And I simply must hear the whole story. After that, we will go out to dinner, if you will—or I will take you home."

"I don't think it would be safe for me to go home," she answered, with perfect seriousness.

"This becomes more thrilling every minute," he cried, as he lit his gas-fire and settled his guest in comfort upon a chair very unlike her seat in the flat below.

The whole world had become an astonishingly different place since the arrival of this guest. The little room was not bad by half, when it had a girl in it!

WHEN he had made coffee and pushed the cigarettes to her, she told him her history.

An only child, motherless, and unwisely indulged by her father, a business man in a provincial town, she grew up with a strong taste for the stage. She helped in the formation of an amateur dramatic club, and on one occasion they engaged the services of a London professional, named Gooch, to coach them for a charity performance. This man's praise encouraged her to hope that if she took to acting as a career she might "make good." Her father objected; but when his death, soon after, left her her own mistress, she came to London, and with Gooch's assistance obtained a place in the chorus at a theatre where musical comedy was played. In a few months she was bored stiff by the whole thing, and saw no prospect of ever doing better.

At that time Herbert Gooch, who was himself in the company, suggested to her the formation of a troupe, which should specialize in country-house entertaining. He introduced to her his friend Bateson, who shared his flat, and a smart lady, who sang contralto and said she was Mrs. Bateson. They set up business together, sometimes giving shows in provincial town-halls, but chiefly relying upon visits to big country houses. No doubt they found Miss Gatesgarth an asset during these visits, as she was so obviously "all right" from the social and moral standpoint. It appeared to her that the profit on the capital she had invested was very meagre; but the other members of the company seemed to be quite satisfied with the financial outlook. She hardly knew when it first dawned upon her that all was not right. Perhaps her first doubt took rise when she found out that Mrs. Bateson had no legal right to the title. Then there was a funny episode concerning this lady and the wearing of a jewel which Lesley remembered as the property of a girl in a house in which they had been entertained a few months before. There had been a burglary at that house, after their visit; and when there was again a successful burglary, at another house, a few weeks after their stay in it, even the unsophisticated Lesley began to put two and two together.

THE flare-up came quite suddenly. They were discussing the latest theft, which was at the house of a millionaire called Gibson—and some allusion, or look, gave her a clue. She was imprudent, she was headstrong—she repudiated them and announced her intention of denouncing them.

They tried to persuade her that she was tarred with the same brush as themselves—that it was useless for her to rebel—that she could not betray her own lot—and that if she would only lie boldly in the witness-box, she might be the saving of them all.

But she was obdurate. She had been taken in, made a fool of, used as a tool—just as her dead father had prophesied would happen to a lonely girl who tried to run herself. The thought stung like a gad-fly.

So she was made a captive. She disappeared; for more than a fortnight, as Aylmer knew from the papers, the Missing Witness had been sought in vain. But she was a difficult creature to hold, and her jailers found themselves quite unable to intimidate her. Evidently they decided that stronger methods must be adopted if they wished to silence her permanently.

The real mainspring of the conspiracy, the power behind, was a man called Marshall, whom Lesley had never seen. She was sentenced to be handed over to this terrible personage, who would "make her see reason." What method of suasion he intended to adopt will never be known. Perhaps it was all a great bluff, designed merely to extort a signature from a cowed and frightened girl. To Aylmer, the fact of their leaving her alone in the flat, and their avowed care that he should be out of hearing before Marshall's arrival on the scene, bore a sinister significance.

The last part of the story was considerably hurried, for Aylmer displayed signs of excitement as he listened. The moment he had grasped the essential facts, he was on his feet.

"This is the first time I've been glad my predecessor paid for a telephone extension up here! I've always grudged the rent of it until this evening! If I can get the police to come here right away, they may catch the arch-conspirator, red-handed."

"'Lean on me,' said he, curtly; and piloted her along the passage."

THE fame of the trial rang over London, and the heroine of the affair gained a most undesired notoriety.

The camera fiend pursued her footsteps with a persistency almost as disagreeable as that of her criminal associates. And the hours of Aylmer's work were exacting. He could be with her, to shield her, only for so short a part of each day.

"If only I were not a pauper!" he cried, as they sat together on penny chairs in a secluded part of Kensington Gardens, "I would take you right away to Italy or somewhere, and keep you all to myself! But you wouldn't come, very likely, even if I could take you!"

"Boy, I'd cross the world barefoot after you," said she, softly. "Don't be so foolish. Didn't you know I have three thousand a year of my own, and when my stepmother dies, I shall have as much again? Hand in your notice at your old office, and we'll start when you like."

He grew crimson, and was overwhelmed. "By Jove! I'd no idea! What a reptile you must think me! I suppose I knew you must have *some* money of your own, if I had taken the time to think sensibly about it. But I didn't. I couldn't. I just fell headlong in love, and never stopped to count the cost——"

"That's the delightful part of it," she answered him, in her incisive way. "If it comes to that, it was your stopping to count—not the cost, but the *steps*, that brought you to me, to save me! If you hadn't gone on and on, counting too long, you would have tumbled to the fact that, if there were only eighty-two stairs, you must be on the wrong floor——"

"But I wasn't. I was on the right floor. The Inner Light flooded my being. I followed the gleam—and here we are!"

"But don't let us stay here," she pleaded, quaintly. "Let us take one another for better or worse, and be off to the sunny south where we can find gardens to laze in, and boats to drift in. You shall take a long, long holiday—ah, my dear, my dear—what is anything they did to me compared with what cruel England has made you suffer? In return for all you did for her, she tied you hand and foot, and left you helpless! And as you rescued me, so I rescue you—and—and I mean to spend my life trying to make it up to you!"

"I haven't much doubt of your success," he told her.

ACROSTICS.

OUR fifteenth acrostic series begins with No. 85, printed below, and will run for four months. Prizes to the value of twelve guineas will be awarded to the most successful solvers.

DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 85.

THE happy time we fleet,
Where earth and ocean meet.

1. A sound that gods and geese employ.
2. A dozen to the pound in Troy.

3. A lady with "a beaming eye."
4. A rainbow envoy from the sky.

5. A half in England, half in France.
6. A help; if first, an ambulance.

7. A bond, a burden hard to bear;
Now it is one thing, now a pair.

EDI.

Answers to Acrostic No. 85 should be addressed to the Acrostic Editor, THE STRAND MAGAZINE, *Southampton Street, Strand, London, W.C.2, and must arrive not later than by the first post on August 10th.*

To every light one alternative answer may be sent; it should be written at the side. At the foot of his answer every solver should write his pseudonym and nothing else.

ANSWER TO No. 84.

1.	T	ors	O
2.	H	onori	F
3.	E	levent	H
4.	T	hreadneedl	E
5.	H	ypati	A
6.	R	octe	R
7.	E	war	T
8.	E	ratosthene	S

NOTES.—Light 1. Torso, or so. 2. On or if; part of *honorificabilitudinitatibus*, the word produced by Costard in "Love's Labour's Lost": costard, an apple. 3. Fathom, 2 yards: chain, 22 yards. 4. Threadneedle Street, the Bank of England; clue, thread: to thread a needle. 5. Kingsley's novel. "Hypatia: or, New Foes with an Old Face" 6 Barry. Cornwall: Procter. 7 Gladstone, water. 8 Lunar crater, lunar Apennines.

For the sixth light of No. 81 any reasonable part of "Rikki-tikki-tavi" is accepted, and for the last light of No. 82 the abbreviated form, "Rasps," is also taken as correct.

The PYJAMA MAN

By ALBERT PAYSON TERHUNE

ILLUSTRATED BY E. G. OAKDALE

MACK LORING had been looking forward to this holiday. He had been looking forward to it for weeks. And he had most assuredly earned it. Yet like many things which are too eagerly looked forward to, there was, at the last, a catch in it—a catch which spoiled the whole thing.

In six years Loring had worked his way up, from junior reporter to a really good position on the New York *Palladium*. And at twenty-seven he was earning eighty dollars a week. Now, even in New York, a newly-wed man and wife may live on eighty dollars a week. At least, they may economize on it. And being very much in love, Mack Loring was wholly willing to economize. He was certain Eve Nevis would be willing, too, if once he could present the proposition to her in the right way.

That right way was to have been the chief and most wonderful feature of his holiday. The Nevis family had rented a little summer camp in the Adirondacks. And very nearly by no effort of his own, Loring had been invited to spend his annual two weeks' holiday there.

He and Eve were not engaged. Often he had thought up perfectly stunning proposals, but always something had happened to prevent the speaking of them. The "something" was apt to take the form of a lump in Mack's throat. Or else, by the time he had swallowed that, someone was fatally certain to break in on their talk, from outside, with a silly interruption.

So the proposal had never been made. Loring used to torture himself by picturing alternately whether Eve would have said yes or no—had not that lump in his throat silenced him or had not someone interrupted. He knew she liked him. He hoped she loved him.

But during his divine two weeks' holiday in her own home he was resolved to speak. Surely the continuous nearness to her would breed an intimacy which must wipe out the fear-bred throat-lump? Yes, Mack Loring was coming home engaged, or else he was coming home an eternally blighted man. One or the other, he was firmly decided.

Then, three days before his holiday was due, came one of those periodical shake-ups for which the *Palladium* office was notorious. And with it came into power a new managing editor—one Ethan Roscoe, imported from a rival paper. Five years earlier, when Loring had been little more than a junior and Roscoe had been the *Bugle's* chief reporter, Mack had snatched an important item of news from under Roscoe's very nose. Thereby he won praise and an increase of salary. This had injured Roscoe's prestige and had earned the ridicule of his associates.

Whereat, Roscoe had vowed crankily that soon or late he would "get" the man who had made a fool of him. That had been five years ago. But several things, meantime, had led Mack to believe that Roscoe had not forgotten. And, here, three days before his annual holiday was due, Loring had received a polite note from the new managing editor—a note which read:—

"My Dear Mr. Loring,—I very much regret that the need for retrenchment on the staff, as well as certain contemplated changes in the paper's personnel, will force us to deprive ourselves of your valued services, at the conclusion of the present month.

"I beg that you will not regard this as a reflection on your uniformly excellent work. Let me take this opportunity to tell you how much I, personally, admire that work—I clearly recall a notable instance of it, five years ago, for example—and how much I regret my inability to avail myself further of it.

"Faithfully yours,
"Ethan V. Roscoe,
"Managing Editor."

Mack Loring would have respected the man more and would have felt less savagely resentful if Roscoe's dismissal letter had contained only the pregnant line:—

"I've got you at last. Clear out!"

Yet his anger at Roscoe faded into

nothingness in face of the grim fact that Loring was fired—was out of a job, at the very start of his holiday, at the very time when he had planned to ask Eve Nevis to be his wife.

What right had a jobless newspaper man, in an era of hard times, to ask a woman to marry him? No right at all! The thing was out of the question. It might be months before Mack could land another decent job. It might be a year or more before he could count on a salary sufficient for him to marry.

The blissful anticipation of his two weeks' forest holiday turned to ashes between his teeth. Of what use was it now? He could not propose to Eve. He had no right to. He could merely be near her and taste the fabled anguish of Tantalus. He must stay out his visit and then go away without saying the wonderful words which might have opened Paradise to him. It was rotten—whichever way he chose to look at it.

Yet the idea did not occur to him to write that he could not accept her parents' invitation. If the fortnight was to mean misery instead of rapture—well, he was going through with it, anyway. Which was a characteristic determination on the part of Mack Loring.

HE stepped on board the Montreal Express at the Grand Central Station at three o'clock on the Saturday afternoon whereon his holiday began. He was assigned to a compartment in one of the two Pullman cars which were to be switched from the rest of the train at Fulton Chain, and which were then to be hitched to an oil-burning engine and dragged through the Chain and on up into the hinterland.

Settling his luggage in the rack and on his seat, Loring took out a cigarette and wandered into the smoking compartment of his car. As he passed along the tiny corridor dividing the smoker from the drawing-room, he glanced idly in through the half-open door of the latter.

Lolling back on the couch-like forward seat of the drawing-room sat a lanky man with a very white face and a very black beard. Loring had no need for a second look—no newspaper man would have needed more than a single glimpse—to recognize the lolling personage as Simon Carver Stell, railroad and mining magnate, Wall Street king, and just then the most notorious man in the news-reading world.

On the seat opposite to the black-bearded man primly sat a little old lady in grey—Mrs. Simon Carver Stell, the scared-eyed and permanently cowed spouse of the magnate.

Every day, for months, the papers had published stories of Stell's enormous financial deals, of the countless evidences of his unscrupulous power. Stell was the best-hated and most prominent man in America—for the moment. Mack remembered now a recent news-announcement that the old blackguard (the paper had referred to him as "the famous financier") had broken down in health and was about to go to his palatial Adirondack camp for a month of complete rest.

Mack passed on and went into the smoker. Nor did he emerge therefrom until he heard the droning summons to the dining-car. The Stells, he noted, dined in their own compartment, attended by no fewer than three of the dining-car's insufficient force of waiters.

Mack was tired. He ordered his berth to be made up early. He had been so lucky as to secure a lower. Into this he crawled at eight o'clock, in order to get a decent night's rest before the two detached cars should arrive at their mountain-station goal at 2 a.m. Passengers at the mountain terminus of the spur road were, as usual, to remain on board until dawn.

By a peerless feat of Houdini contortionism, commonly known (and too seldom praised) as "undressing in the berth," Loring divested himself of his day clothes and got into his lavender-and-white-striped pyjamas. He was asleep, in spite of the jar and stuffiness of his quarters, before the train had travelled another three miles.

An hour or two later he awoke, and heard a man in the upper berth snoring thunderously.

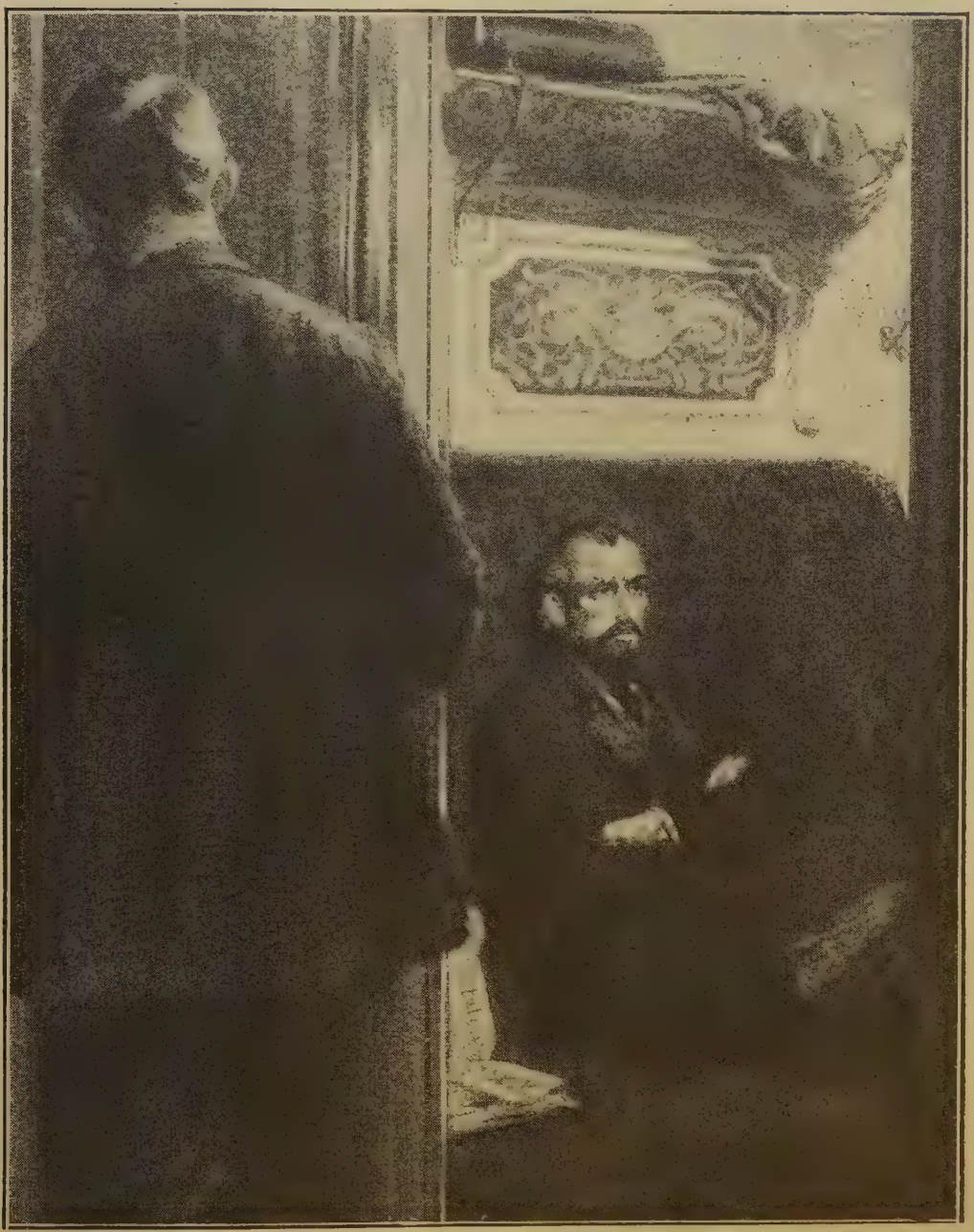
"Shut up!" begged Mack, shaking the berth-curtains until their rings jangled. The snoring stopped. Mack fell asleep again.

He dreamed that the man in the upper berth tried considerately to choke back his snores, and that the effort caused the man to swell up and explode. The explosion brought the upper berth crashing down upon the lower and sent Loring flying through the air into distant space, hurling him at last, with a nerve-racking shock, against the managerial desk of Ethan Roscoe. The terrific impact brought Mack to his senses.

He was not plastered against the side of Roscoe's desk, as he had dreamed. But neither was he in his snug lower berth. He was lying in a heap, on the ground, in a thicket of bristly weeds.

Above him—and hanging over as if just about to fall—swayed the Pullman car in which he had been sleeping. The car had buckled. A gaping rent in its side showed where Loring had been shot forth from his berth and into the weeds.

In the air still hung echoes of the explosion-sound which had mingled with Mack's dream.



"Loring had no need for a second look to recognise the lolling personage as Simon Carver Stell, the railroad and mining magnate."

And over and beyond that rang the yells of scared men, the screams of new-waked women, and the raucous orders bellowed by train-hands.

The two cars, with their oil engine, had rounded a curve in the mountain spur-line and had smashed, head-on, into a leisurely goods train coming from the opposite direction. The train-dispatcher, up the road, had taken a glass too many that night. The wreck was the result.

His newspaper instincts at once aflame, Mack Loring scrambled to his feet and stumbled toward the damaged train. The first step told him that he was bruised and scratched, and that the breath was temporarily

knocked out of his lungs, but that he had escaped otherwise unharmed. In brief, he was competent to do a reporter's work, at this scene of a corking good news-story.

He had stuck his watch into the breast pocket of his pyjamas when he went to bed. It was still there; and it was still going. Its hands, in the wavery light, indicated the hour as one-twenty-one. Any time before two o'clock would be sufficient for Mack to telephone his article to the *Palladium* office.

Loring jumped aboard the listed and buckled front car. It was full of shouting and wriggling people. The conductor was examining the tangled mass of passengers by the light of two electric flares. Everyone was more or less shaken up. Some were bruised by the tumbles from their berths; two or three seemed to be suffering from broken limbs; and nearly everyone had been more or less badly cut by the flying glass. But that appeared to be the full extent of the casualties. The passengers had got off easily.

In the rear car matters were still better. This car had not even been derailed. Some of its windows were shattered. Its passengers were scratched and shaken up and scared. That was all.

Mack jumped to the ground and ran to the crumpled engine. He found here the gruesome little group of lantern-bearing trainmen his newspaper experience had taught him to expect. The group was huddled around three moveless bodies which had just been stretched out on the ground—the bodies of the engineer and fireman of the oil locomotive, and the engineer of the goods train. From a babbling railway man Mack learned the names of the three victims and jotted them down on the tablets of his news-trained memory.

That seemed to be the extent of it, from a reporter's standpoint: there had been a night collision; three railroad *employés* had been killed, two engines and one Pullman car had been wrecked; some thirty passengers had been frightened and cut; and one or two limbs had been broken. It was good enough, but not great. It was worth telephoning to the office, if Mack could find a long-distance telephone, in time; but it was not worth a "spread." Indeed, from an editorial standpoint, the most interesting thing about the disaster was the fact that Simon Carver Stell was on board the smitten train and that the magnate's important life had been imperilled.

AS this knowledge sifted into Loring's brain, it occurred to him to find out how the financier had withstood the shock. Perhaps, in the stress of the moment, Stell might even be willing to say something quotable about the wreck or about his sensations therein.

With this hope in the back of his mind Loring left the group around the three victims and swung back on to the front platform of the buckled car. The front door had been ripped from its hinges. A lantern had been dropped on the vestibule floor and was still burning there. Mack picked up the light and made for the drawing-room, which was at the car's extreme front.

The drawing-room door had also been ripped away, and the glass of the partitions was in fragments. The conductor, having just ploughed a path through the passengers, was entering the uptilted drawing-room as Mack appeared in the vestibule. Peering through the gloom of the compartment, the conductor turned to Loring.

"Gimme that light!" he commanded, snatching the lantern from Mack, and flashing its rays into the upset room. "All right in here?" he went on, obsequiously.

Then he caught his breath, with a ludicrously explosive grunt. Loring, peeping over the blue-clad shoulder, understood why.

There on the tiptilted plush lounge crouched a withered little figure in white, wisps of grey hair straggling down the stricken face. It was Mrs. Stell—nightgown-draped and apparently unhurt. But she was making strange gasping sounds, and her body swayed back and forth in rhythmic measure to her gasps.

In her lap lay something over which she was pawing bewilderedly. It was a man's head—the head of Simon Carver Stell, railroad magnate.

The rest of Stell's body trailed along the slanted floor and the corner of the blue plush couch in a distorted series of angles never intended by nature. Beside it lay the heavy dislodged steel cornice of the drawing-room, painted to imitate mahogany—the great lump of painted steel which in its fall had broken the neck of Simon Carver Stell!

To a reporter of Mack's experience, as to the conductor and to Mrs. Stell, a single glance was enough to tell the story. The man was dead—probably struck to death as he had slept.

High in Mack Loring's heart blazed the news-instinct. Here was something well worth stopping the presses for—the most important piece of news of the summer. And to him alone of all the newspaper fraternity was it given to score for his paper this transcendent scoop! If he could get word of it into the *Palladium* office in time for the last edition his paper could beat the town on it. Not another paper—not even the Associated Press—could hope to get the tidings in time to print a line of it that morning.

Wheeling about, Mack dashed out of the car. As he ran, a backward glance showed him that a doctor was at work among the

hurt passengers, and that a semblance of order was restored. He could be of no help here. And the way was clear for him to get to the nearest building which held a telephone.

"How far off is the next station?" he demanded of a trainman.

"Hillslope!" came the puffed reply. "'Bout a mile up the track."

He waved a hand in the general direction of the station and hurried on. Mack Loring did not wait to ask further questions. At something like record speed he was dashing down the dark vista of track.

And as he ran, he gratefully recalled something which he had done by purely unconscious cerebration. As he had come back into the wrecked front car after the collision had sent him catapulting out through the hole in the car-side, he had noted the mass of broken windowpane fragments which strewed the floor. And in passing he had groped in the ruins under his berth for his shoes. By a miracle he had found them at once. It had been the work of two seconds to slip them on to his bare feet as a safeguard against the splintered glass.

Now he was heartily thankful for his own impulse in shoeing himself. A mile run, barefoot, over a cinder-bristling railroad-track, would have been torture. But at the same moment came a realization that, in spite of his speed, he was chattering with cold. The night air of the Adirondacks was biting through his clothes in a most astonishing fashion.

Then suddenly he knew why. He was still in his pyjamas! The rush and excitement and turmoil had left him no time for recollecting the extreme sketchiness of his attire. Shod but sockless, pyjama-clad but otherwise undressed, carrying a valuable watch but not a penny in cash, Mack Loring was sprinting through the night in a region whose landmarks were unknown to him, hundreds of miles from home and bent on an all-important service for the very newspaper which had just discharged him!

THE fact of his incomplete attire gave Mack only a momentary jog. So absorbed was he in his mission that he had scant thought for any lesser matter. The story of Simon Carver Stell's sudden death would stir the reading public and the financial world to the foundations. Its first publication in the *Palladium*, while no other morning paper had a word of the great event, would be a tremendous score for that lucky sheet. It would be something for reporters to talk over for years to come. And on Mack Loring alone hung the *Palladium's* hopes of winning this epoch-marking scoop. Small wonder the runner had not more attention to pay to the details of his own costume just then!

Ahead of him, around a bend in the track, presently twinkled a feeble light—the oil lamp at the end of a tiny station. Mack put on a new burst of speed.

In another minute he was on the station's rickety plank platform, brushing past two other men who were approaching the station from the same direction as himself.

He flung open the door of the station's single room and made for a railed corner behind which drowsed a shirt-sleeved station agent. Loring was not interested in the agent. But he was overwhelmingly interested in the telephone instrument which stood on the shabby desk at the sleeper's side.

The slumbering agent was awakened by the pound of feet across the floor, and stared to see above him a youth clad in striped pale lavender and white—a youth with tousled hair, and a deep and bleeding scratch on his forehead, and with hands crusted with loam, and with goodly smudges of the same good brown earth smearing his outlandish costume. It was enough to make any self-respecting station-agent gape!

The youth had caught up the telephone and was frenziedly pounding the receiver-hook up and down to waken the slow operator at the other end of the wire.

"Hi, you!" bleated the agent, slumping far back in his chair and sputtering wildly. "What in——"

He got no farther. A peevish voice, from the rudely-aroused operator at Central, snapped "Well?"

"Give me New York!" called Mack, trying to steady his voice, and to stop panting so noisily from his run. "New York—Beekman 15,001!"

Then—his goal in sight, and the station clock pointing to one-forty-four—Loring's real troubles began. A gnarled hand caught him by the shoulder and spun him round. He found himself confronting two railroadmen.

"Sorry to butt in on you," said one, with much firmness, "but this is the Company's wire. And I'm here to use it on Company business."

As he spoke he snatched the receiver, right deftly and unexpectedly, from Loring's hand. Mack made a futile grab for it.

"Sorry, but we've got to report the wreck. We'll be using that wire, pretty steady, back an' forth, for the next two hours or more—what with makin' reports an' c'municatin' with the wreckin'-crew an' all. We——"

"This watch cost me just one hundred dollars," broke in Mack, wheeling on the conductor and interrupting that functionary just as the latter was giving a number to

"'Sorry to butt in on you,' said one of the railroad-men, 'but this is the Company's wire. And I'm here to use it on Company business.'"

Central. "It s yours, if you will give me first chance at that 'phone, and fifteen minutes to talk in it."

"Nothing doing!" decreed the conductor. "Company orders. All private business has got to keep off this wire till——"

"But——"

"I take it you're from the wreck," put in the conductor, surveying Mack's apparel and his cuts. "I s'pose you want to 'phone your folks at home that you're O. K.? Don't you worry. You can do that just as well

in the morning. They won't know there's been a wreck, till long after that. No private telegrams will have a chance to go through from here. And the 'phone will be busy. It's Company orders to keep the papers from finding out about these things till all the full official reports are in. Your folks won't read about it anywhere, till after you get time to——"

He discovered he was talking to thin—or rather to thick—air. Loring had vanished.

Mack was too old a newspaper man not to have grasped the whole miserable situation. By long experience he knew the ways of railroad officials in the matter of wrecks. And he knew how late and how grudgingly would word go forth to the public of this present disaster—far off in the wilds, where it was to be supposed no reporter could come nosing in. The knowledge made Loring tenfold more resolved to get his message to the *Palladium* before the final edition should go to press; and it set his reportorial wits to working overtime.

Outside the station a waning moon was casting a ghostly pale radiance over the world. By its rays Mack took note of the point where the single telephone wire emerged from the outer wooden wall of the station. He saw where it connected with a pole which bore but two more such wires.

To this pole he went. From its base he could just see the next pole of the backwoods telephone-line; but it gave him his direction. And off he set, through the dim-lit woods, following the triple strand of wire and its occasional poles.

LORING travelled as fast as he could. After a half-mile of plunging progress and of occasional tumbles he traced the line to where a single wire once more led off from the three and was strung from tree to tree into a farther stretch of the woods. This was what the man had been looking for. Thus, he knew from memories of rural telephones, did a wire leave the main line to connect with the house of some subscriber. And he sought such a house.

In another five minutes he found it. It was a roomy bungalow on the very shores of a lake that shimmered eerily in the white moonshine. To the landward wall of this cottage ran the wire.

Loring stepped back and looked up at the house. Not a light showed in any of its diamond-pane windows. A wide veranda, supported on rustic posts, girt all four sides. Mack's first impulse was to rouse the house and to entreat leave to use the telephone. Then he hesitated. There was an even chance that he would bring down upon himself a storm of cross abuse from the roused inmates, and with it a command to be gone. It was a far more than even chance that he would be forbidden to use the telephone. In his present plight—scratches, bruises, pyjamas, and all—he might very likely be looked on as an escaped lunatic. In any event an hour or more might pass before he could explain matters to everyone's satisfaction, soothe the sleepers' ruffled feelings, and get his coveted contact with the 'phone—if, before that time, the local constable did not have him in charge as a dangerous imbecile.

No, the chances against him were too great. He dared not risk them. Already his watch told him it was five minutes past two. It was getting perilously close to press-time. And with the stark need came Resolution.

Kicking off his shoes, he mounted the veranda on noiseless feet. Approaching the rough-hewn front door, he tried the knob. The door was locked. Next he approached a window. It too was fastened; but by tearing a thin sliver of wood from one of the rusty posts, Mack succeeded in inserting the flat bit of splinter between the loosely-meeting upper and lower sashes. Then a scientific pressure gradually shoved aside the old-fashioned and wobbly window-lock.

Mack raised the unfastened window inch by inch and stepped over its sill into an apartment that seemed to be at once hall and lounging-room. Through the six windows filtered the moonlight, strong enough to make the place dimly visible. Loring stood still and listened. His silent advent had roused no one. But his work was scarcely begun; he set off on a tip-toed search for the telephone.

Luck, after flouting him outrageously, was coming Mack's way at last; for in the very centre of a patch of moonshine from the window he saw the 'phone on a bracket against the wall.

Loring cast one more look around the tastefully-appointed hall and up the flight of stairs which led directly down to its centre from the low gallery above. All was quiet. Then he picked up the telephone-receiver. Apparently Central had been too busy to fall asleep again since his earlier call. For almost at once he got her crisply challenging: "Well?"

Speaking almost in a whisper, yet with all the distinctness he could muster, Loring gave the *Palladium's* number. He heard it repeated. Then followed an endless waiting, in the course of which he wearied of marshalling his stirring facts in their most concise order and began to shift wearily from one foot to the other.

After a century, he heard the hail of a voice he recognized—the voice of the *Palladium* switchboard's night-operator.

"Miss Mudie!" breathed Mack, raising his voice as little as he dared. "This is Loring—Mack Loring. Please put me on to the night editor quickly. And, Miss Mudie, in case they cut me off before I finish, please tell the night editor that Simon Carver Stell was killed an hour ago in a railroad wreck, near Hillslope, in the Adirondacks. I saw him dead. I was on the same train. I'm 'phoning from there."

After another interminable half-minute he heard himself hailed wonderingly by Doty, the night editor, to whom he had bidden good-bye a bare twenty-four hours earlier. But Mack cut in unceremoniously on the other's questions by announcing the news he bore, and his manner of getting it.

He could hear Doty yell the tidings aloud and summon a man to the 'phone to take down Loring's story in record time. The rest was a mere matter of routine. In terse, concise sentences, Mack related the tale of the wreck and of Stell's manner of dying. He did not seek for fine language, but spat forth the baldly potent facts, in their order. The office could whip the tale into shape, if need be—and if there were time. He ended, with the names of the three dead men, the numbers of the two demolished engines, and such other items of the disaster as might be used to follow the all-important fact—the fact of Stell's demise. By experience he could visualize the scene at the wire's other end, the snatching of page after page from the man taking down the startling news, and the shouted orders to the press-room.

After fifteen minutes of rapid talk, the story was told. Loring all at once felt very tired and very cold and a little sick from reaction. His work was done. His scoop was scored. He slumped.

As he gave the usual "Good night," which marks the ending of such dictation, the man at the other end interrupted:—

"Wait, old man! Mr. Roscoe

"'Hands up, please!' came the mandate in a very sweet but somewhat tremulous undertone. 'I heard whisperings, and I got up in time to catch at least one of you!'"

wants to speak to you. I'll switch you to his office. He wants to speak to you about——"

"Well, I don't want to speak to him," snapped Mack, crossly. "Tell him so. He——"

But evidently the connection had already been made. For now Loring recognized the managing editor's detested voice on the 'phone. Yet somehow there was a certain difference in it from its normal tones.

"Loring?" the managing editor was saying. "You don't need to be told what a scoop you've given us."

"No," growled Mack, "I don't."

"I sacked you," went on Roscoe, less jauntily than usual. "And you get back at me by giving us this great scoop. It—it makes me feel like revising my list of the world's great men, Loring, and of giving myself a lower place on it. I don't mind saying I feel like a yellow dog. Let it go at that. Your job's waiting for you when you finish your holiday. You don't need to be told that, old man. And there'll be a two-hundred-dollar bonus here for you, too, for to-night's work. We——"

A blinding flare of light seared Mack Loring's eyeballs. The dim room leaped into vivid illumination as a hand turned on the electric switch from the gallery above. Loring dropped the receiver and spun about, blinking and dazed.

At the head of the stairs stood a girl, a filmy *négligée* swathed about her slim body, a levelled pistol in one outflung hand. The pistol's black muzzle was trained on the harlequin-clad Loring.

"Hands up, please!" came the mandate in a very sweet but somewhat tremulous undertone. "I heard whisperings down there, and I got up in time to catch at least one of you! I——"

She paused, the sweet voice trailing into silence as she took in the details of her captive's aspect. Then her eyes wandered to his face—and the pistol fell to the floor with a clatter.

"Mack Loring!" she cried, incredulous. "*Mack!*"

BUT before she had spoken the first word, Loring knew into whose cottage he had broken. Forgetful of his airy attire and his general look of disreputableness, he was bounding up the stairs toward her.

"Eve!" he exulted. "Eve! I've still got my job! And I've got two hundred dollars to spend on an engagement-ring. Honest, I have, Eve! Won't you marry me, sweetheart! You *must!*"

Eve Nevis took one long and wondering look at the dishevelled figure. Then she spoke.

"Marry you?" she repeated, dreamily. "Why—why—yes! Of course, I will. At least—at least, I will, if I don't change my mind when I wake up. For, of course, this is a dream. No one in real life ever looked one-tenth as—as impossible as you do. I—— Oh, there's dad coming! He generally sleeps through everything, too. So it *must* be a dream. Just the same, I'm sure he'll be able to—to lend you some—some cleaner ones than those!"

The SIDERIC PENDULUM

A new step into the Unknown

SIR A. CONAN DOYLE

HAS READ THIS ARTICLE AND HAS WRITTEN THE FOLLOWING INTRODUCTORY NOTE ON THE SUBJECT:—

The sideric pendulum has been known to Spiritualists as a medium of communication. There was an account in the papers about a year ago of how a jewel was lost at a garden party, and how the daughter of the host by this method was able to indicate where it could be found. But these indications as to sex, etc., are, so far as I know, new, and of very great interest. I tried it fourteen times, without a failure, upon photographs, in several cases concealing the photograph so that I did not myself know, until after the ring had given the circle or the ellipse, what the sex was. It never failed. I find on testing other materials apart from sex that one gets a constant result—*e.g.*, gold and amber are circular or male, silver is oval, steel and bronze are almost longitudinal. Photographs are, on the whole, better than letters, and recent letters better than old ones, but the latter respond for a long time. I had a male circle from a letter of 1776. It is a score for Mr. Pussyfoot that the only substance which I have found give the evil reaction—that is, from left to right—is Alcohol.

I agree with the writer that this bears strongly upon the Divining-rod. Even more strongly does it bear upon psychometry when a person with sensitive perceptions takes, we will say, a lock of hair and derives from it much knowledge about the owner. If so indirect a thing as a photograph can give definite information, how much more might an actual portion of the personality be expected to do?

One cannot, so far as I can see, claim the matter as bearing directly upon Spiritualism, but it strongly supports the existence of forces outside our present scientific knowledge. These seem to be of a very subtle personal and psychic nature, which brings them into the same class with those other forces of etherealized and refined matter forming the basis of the physical phenomena which inexperienced people have for so long derided and denied.

The Pendulum and its History.

IT was a warm, dreamy summer night. A tall, middle-aged man sat in his study before a large writing-desk, his glances wandering idly over the variety of articles on which he had been experimenting with the sideric pendulum. A solitary lamp cast flickering waves of yellow light over them, while he himself was left in a half-shadow.

The name of the man was Frederick Kallenberg, unknown at that time to the world at large, but destined to be mentioned in the near and distant future with that of the propounder of the "Od" theory, and the discoverers of the X-rays and radium.

He sat and thought to what new experiments he might next put the sideric pendulum. At his right hand lay a photograph of his wife, who had gone the long way from which nobody ever returns—as is commonly

supposed. Mechanically, without any clear expectation of results, acting, perhaps, on a subconscious purpose, he placed it in front of him and for a little while held the pendulum over it.

What happened?

Well, the wonder! The wonder will astound the world, justify a hundred times those who always defended metaphysics as an undisputable reality, and put the materialist and other sceptics, who thought they could laugh and scorn the divining-rod out of existence, absolutely and finally in the wrong. And this is meant in all seriousness, too.

For in the hand of Kallenberg, on this summer night, the sideric pendulum proved that the photograph of his wife, whom he had buried not long before—and, for the matter of that, the photograph of any and every person alive or dead, may he or she have died but yesterday or a hundred years ago—is not a dead reflection of the original, but is living.

This photograph shows the correct position for using the pendulum.

And, pray, what is the sideric pendulum?

To answer that question scientifically needs a somewhat longer explanation, which I shall attempt farther on. But to answer it in a way that everybody may grasp at once the stupendous importance of this discovery, let me say that it is a never-failing divining-rod you can use at home, and not only for the finding of water and metals or other "dead" bodies, but also for the exploration and determination of the character, sex, and morality of any and every human or animal being from photographs, handwriting, drawings, in fact, everything that has received the radio-active emanation from that body.

It is not a new thing, either—part of it at least: a fact which makes the discovery not any the less great and sensationally important. It may have been known in some form or other to the human race from the dawn of ages, as every occult thing has been known. But please understand that the sideric pendulum is no longer an occult thing. In history, however, we cannot trace it back farther than to the Romans of the early centuries. Under the Emperor Valens (364–378 A.D.), so we are told—several leading citizens were accused of having conspired against him and tried to have the name of his successor revealed to them through the sideric pendulum. They had used a ring, which, by means of a thread, held between the fingers of one hand, was suspended over a vessel of some metal. In its side, forming a circle, were engraved the letters of the alphabet. The ring began to swing round, but stopped at certain letters, and thus the name sought for was disclosed.

What the Pendulum Does.

The emanation of every body has an individuality of its own, producing different, well-specified movements of the pendulum. The basic movements

are the circle and the ellipse, or oval. The circle signifies the male and positive, the ellipse the female and negative—the terms male and female to be understood not only as an abstract, but in the ordinary sense of sex, when the movements are caused by a human or animal body or even a photograph of them.

When Kallenberg made his sensational step into the unknown, conquering for exact science a large part of what up to that time had been assigned to the realm of metaphysics or occultism; when on that night he held the pendulum over the photograph of his wife, supposed to be nothing but a piece of dead cardboard, he found it to be herself, her "soul," causing the pendulum to swing in certain well-defined geometrical figures.

It is not the purpose of this article to describe his subsequent experiments in detail, but to report the facts he established for everybody to reproduce at leisure and to his own satisfaction, for they are not—or at least not in any remarkable degree—subject to special gifts or mediumship of the operator.

The basic fact of all what Kallenberg has proved is that all living bodies emanate a substance which at the moment of exposure to the camera is absorbed by the plate or film and conveyed from there to every positive print made from it, no matter whether they number thousands and thousands. This—it may be well to mention here—applies, however, only to photographic prints, not to reproductions of them in magazines and otherwise, since the latter have not been in contact with the original through the intermediary of the film.

That much proved, other experiments following as a matter of course showed that everything having been in contact with a living being, human or animal—handwriting, articles of clothing, especially underwear, jewellery, boots and shoes, for instance—holds and reflects these emanations in a way unfailingly individual to that body and strong enough to move the pendulum even if a pile of books or other obstacles are inserted between it and the object experimented on.

In all these cases it will be found that over objects produced or used by a female the pendulum will swing in a narrow ellipse (an oval), while the male sex is indicated by a circular swing, even if by nature of the substance different movements should occur. The radiation of the subject dominates the radiation of the object.

Take a wedding-ring, for instance. Kallenberg used the one worn by his wife for twenty years. Being of pure gold the pendulum should have moved in a circle, as the character of gold is masculine. But having absorbed the personal magnetism of the wearer for so long a time, it showed the female sign of the ellipse.

Again, suppose in a much-used leather case containing documents are kept a number of white sheets of paper. When bought at the dealer's they would produce no movements at all. But having for a considerable time absorbed the emanations of the owner of the case, they would swing the pendulum exactly as the owner would himself.

Further, pure silk swings the pendulum in a wide circle. If worn by a man the movements would be the same. Kallenberg, in experimenting with the tie of a young man who in a state of unsound mind had committed suicide, found, however, the pendulum swinging in the same confused way over it as it did over the photograph and handwriting of deceased.

How to Use the Pendulum.

Take a smooth silk or cotton thread or woman's hair, about fifteen inches long. Tie a little noose in one end, taking care to cut the loose end of the thread close to the knot, to prevent leakage of the magnetic current into the air. At the other end fix a wedding or other ring without stones, a golden collar-stud, or any like article. Other metals will answer the purpose also, but gold is considered the best. Here, too, the loose end of the knot must be trimmed off. Then push the noose on the first joint of the forefinger, which it must fit tightly. It is not sufficient to wind the thread around the finger.

Now the operator, if he has not done so before, divests himself of every metallic article, such as watch, keys, coins, pocket-knife, studs, etc., as they might interfere with the movements of the pendulum, that is, stop them or lead to deviations which would tend to wrong conclusions. For the same reason no metallic articles should be in too close proximity with the place where he intends to carry out the experiments. Also, which is important, he must take care to stand true in the line of the meridian, with the face turned south. The right hand, palm downward, forefinger extended and the other fingers closed, is raised over the object just high enough so that the ring is suspended one or two inches above it. The left arm, being of opposite polarization, is best held at the back. The picture on page 181 shows the correct position. The same applies to the thumb, which must not therefore touch the forefinger. For a better insulation a newspaper or sheet of white paper may be placed under the object. The pendulum must be held steady, which

will not be found very difficult even if the experiments are continued for an hour or two.

As soon as the pendulum has come to rest over the object it enters the orbit or curve of its radiation of ions and begins to swing—usually after a minute or two. All bodies—except corpses, over which the pendulum would remain immovable—send out electro-magnetic ions.

The circle stands for male sex. Over minerals, differentiated by the radius and force of the swing in each case, gold, pyrites, and others. Water: over quiet water—water in a glass, ponds, lakes, etc., or their photographs—the swing is quiet and regular; over rapids, falls, etc., it is agitated. Just try it over a photograph of the Niagara Falls.

Ellipse: Female sex. Over minerals it stands for silver, lead, and others.

Straight line or narrow ellipse east to west: Moral degeneration, abandonment to vice, lying habit, etc. Beware of that sign!

The Pendulum Over Letters, Oil-Paintings' Drawings, Handwritten Music, etc.

Anybody having read the foregoing carefully will be able now to determine at once without any difficulty the sex of a kitten or newly-hatched chicken, or whether a steed shown in a photograph is a horse or a mare, and a bird in a tree male or female. But significant as that may seem and undoubtedly is, it takes second place in importance to the fact that a few lines or even a single word written a hundred or some hundred years ago will reveal to the experimentator through the pendulum—just as the photograph does—the sex, health or ill-health, morality, temper, and sentiments of the writer. And drawings and paintings are quite as loose-tongued. For when they were produced the "I" of the originator, as it then lived and thought and felt, entered the canvas or parchment or paper to stay there for ever; to move this modern divining-rod of an epigonic explorer of the unknown hundreds of years thereafter, and to show to the sceptic, unbelieving world that life is not a thing to vanish at the moment of death.

Now everybody will be able to test the sincerity of a writer of a letter. If a poor nephew should write to a rich uncle: "My dearest uncle," and the pendulum should move in an ellipse over it—the contrary sign—the uncle would do well to take it at a discount only. Using the typewriter will not prevent detection, as the emanations of a writer are received and retained by the typewritten sheet as well. Anonymous writers will have a hard time now, as control tests over other specimens of their handwriting or over photographs may establish their identity. Captain Dreyfus could not have been convicted in Paris if the sideric pendulum had been held over his handwriting and the infamous *bordereau*.

As every energy is strongest at its source, the swing of the pendulum if lowered enough to rest on the photograph or handwriting will often be turned round in a whirl or attracted so powerfully by the magnetic force that it stands still.

The Pendulum as Egg-Tester.

Immense sums of money will be saved every year if breeders will test their eggs. Millions of unfertile eggs are annually lost to human consumption and disappointment caused to breeders, thus wasting time, energy, and money. The pendulum does not move over an unfertile egg, but swings in a circle or an ellipse over those that will hatch a cockerel or pullet respectively. So breeders can now determine the proportion of the sexes they want.

The advocates of the old-fashioned divining-rod are entirely vindicated now, for the penetrating power of ionic emanation is almost incredible. It does not make any difference whether a photograph or handwriting is tested openly or in a sealed envelope handed, perhaps, by a friend—which, moreover, would prove the *bona fides* of the pendulum to any doubter. And if a pile of books or magazines is placed on top of the object the pendulum will act just the same.

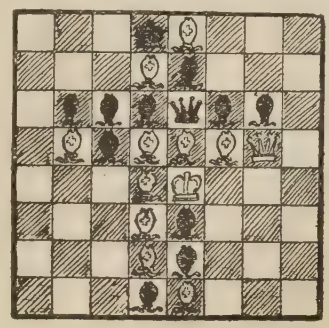
We have, therefore, in the sideric pendulum a precise and dependable divining-rod for the prospecting for minerals or water.

In view of all these facts it is not saying too much to call Kallenberg's discovery a new step into the unknown. The practical value of it, which seems almost as great as the possibilities it opens for further research, is sufficient justification for its publication, notwithstanding the apparent danger that the revelations of the sideric pendulum may be misused and misconstrued by irresponsible people.

PERPLEXITIES. By Henry E. Dudeney.

513.—IN MEMORIAM.

HERE is a little puzzle that I devised recently as a memorial of those chess problemists and players who fell in the Great War. It is an impossible position as it stands, but by merely making two of the bishops change places the position may be made possible and White can then mate in two moves. Which two bishops change places?



A few words of explanation should make it quite easy for the reader to solve. If each player in a game has ten bishops and there have been only four captures on each side, then (1) each player must have an odd number of bishops running on each colour; that is 9 and 1, or 7 and 3, or 5 and 5; and (2) each player must have the same number running on each colour. At present White has 6 running on white and 4 on black, while Black has 4 running on white and 6 on black. The position is therefore impossible, as it breaks both conditions. A little thought will now show which two bishops change places.

514.—BINKS'S GOOD POINT.

WHILE speaking to a friend in the street the other day, I drew his attention to a man walking along on the other side.

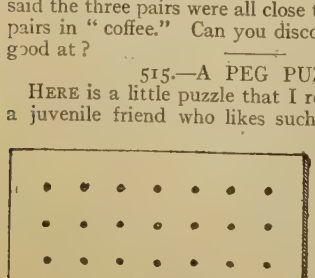
"There goes poor Binks," I said. "I am afraid he is a good-for-nothing."

"Excuse me," my friend replied, "but I happen to know that he is good for something. He is certainly very good at—at—I've forgotten the word, but I remember that it has three pairs of similar letters together, like the f's and e's in coffee, which, of course, has only two pairs."

I immediately suggested "*soccer-football*," but he said the three pairs were all close together, like the two pairs in "coffee." Can you discover what Binks was good at?

515.—A PEG PUZZLE.

HERE is a little puzzle that I recently had made for a juvenile friend who likes such things. It is easier than it looks, if you use a little judgment, and it can conveniently be tried with counters on a prepared diagram. The illustration represents a square mahogany board with forty-nine holes in it. There are ten pegs, to be placed in the positions shown, and the puzzle is to remove only three of these pegs to different holes so that the ten shall form five rows with four pegs in every row. Which three would you move and where would you place them?



516.—THE FLOCKS OF SHEEP.

FOUR brothers were comparing the number of sheep that they owned. It was found that Claude had ten more sheep than Dan. If Claude gave a quarter of his sheep to Ben, then Claude and Adam would together have the same number as Ben and Dan together. If, then, Adam gave one-third to Ben, and Ben gave a quarter of what he then held to Claude, who then passed on a fifth of his holding to Dan, and Ben then divided one quarter of the number he then possessed equally amongst Adam, Claude, and Dan, they would all have an equal number of sheep. How many sheep did each son possess?

517.—. . . . . LA GUERRE.

THIS is a new missing word puzzle, sent me by T. K. All the missing words contain the same five letters:—

In future years French schoolboys, as they study and . . . . . their history lessons, will contemplate with horror the record of cruel deeds committed by the invading Hun, who did not . . . . . the rifle or . . . . . on helpless non-combatants, and in whose track . . . . . and ruin followed. On the fields of France the clustering vine was ruthlessly cut down, as well as trees on which . . . . . and apples grew. The heroic deeds of the French soldiers need not be engraved on . . . . . or granite, but the Hun, however he . . . . . down by cunning words the magnitude of his guilt, ... only the ignominy of his deeds.

Solutions to Last Month's Puzzles.

509.—PUNCTUATION.

THE sentence should be punctuated as follows: If "is" is not "is," and "is not" is "is," what is it "is not" is, and what is it "is" is not, if "is not" is "is"?

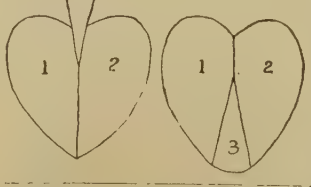
510.—A CRYPTIC MONOGRAM.

THE correct interpretation is "A FOND LOVER." That is to say, A F on D, L over.

511.—THE CLERK'S MISTAKE.

THE clerk pointed out that the sentence should have read, "As he reinstated, as herein stated, the man in question," etc.

512.—CHANGING THE SUIT.



THE diagram shows how the Spade may be cut into three parts that will fit together and form a Heart

MANY correspondents are informed that a large collection of the "Perplexities" that have appeared in these pages up to the close of the year 1914 will be found preserved in "Amusements in Mathematics" and "The Canterbury Puzzles: and Other Curious Problems," by Henry E. Dudeney (Thomas Nelson and Sons, Limited, 3s. 6d. each). Those that have appeared during the past five and a half years will be reprinted, with much additional matter, in a new volume in preparation.

THE
STRAND
MAGAZINE

Sept., 1920.

"THEY WERE ABSORBED IN THEIR REMINISCENCES; AND A FEW YARDS OFF ISABEL WATCHED THEM, HER LIPS TREMBLING, A DULL SENSE OF RESENTMENT GROWING IN HER HEART."

(*See page* 189.)

The HEART of COLUMBINE

By RICHARD FLETCHER

Illustrated by STANLEY DAVIS

DUNCANSON, the artist newly risen to fame, and his wife were giving a fancy-dress dance. It was really a carnival in costume, and the invitations were decorated with a drawing by the famous Robert Duncanson himself, a galaxy of pierrots, columbines, and harlequins seemingly sweeping the prospective guests to the very studio in Fulham where the painter and his wife lived.

And what a studio it was, this ancient barn converted into a workshop and treasure-house by his wealth and taste, for though he had not won fame early, and had known bad days of hardship and struggle in Paris, he was now on the crest of the wave. His original paintings commanded above five figures, and royalties on reproduction were amassed in such sums as testified to their popularity the world over. And the man himself, vivid in mind and health, married to the woman he adored, and surrounded by a group of friends who loved him for his wit, his generosity, his charm, was the personification of success.

He stood now, arrayed in the costume of the Clown in "I Pagliacci," waiting for his guests, and for his wife to join him; and he moved about the room, giving it last touches with a practised hand.

Built above was an all-round gallery, from which hung silken carpets and Italian brocades. Their colours were mellowed by giant candles glowing in antique candelabra.

All manner of beautiful things were to be seen: Gothic wood-carvings, marble saints, subtle enamels, paintings, and clusters of roses in Chinese jars.

Presently he grew restless and impatient, waiting for the one without whom he could never be satisfied for long. Besides, he had something to tell her—perhaps even to confess; an impulsive action that had seemed nothing at the time, just a stray gleam of kindness thrown to a fellow-mortal—an invitation to the dance to an old friend.

It occurred to him that Isabel might not see it in the same light. What a fool he had been to tell her, as he had done in those marvellous early days of courtship, of the few love-passages that had taken place between him and little Cyprienne, his friend and fellow-worker in those now far-off Bohemian days in Paris. There had been nothing at all between them save a slight and passing tenderness; but women understand these things so little, and wives claim so much; the radiant present is not enough for them, they want the dim, mysterious past as well.

When he had come suddenly face to face with Cyprienne in Bond Street, she had seemed like a creature in a dream, and he had reproached himself for not being better

pleased to see her; and in the fear that she would think his good fortune had changed him, he had bidden her to their festivity.

Almost he wished he had not done so, and if Isabel did not come down soon there would hardly be a moment to let her understand.

"Isabel!" he called. "Aren't you ready?"

Even as he spoke a door opened in the gallery above, and she stepped down the Jacobean staircase, a lovely Columbine in white, with no colour to break the ethereal charm of her appearance. She stood a moment, a fantastic vision of delight against the dark background.

Duncanson felt a thrill as he watched her.

"You are wonderful," he said, coming to the foot of the staircase and looking up at her. Then the critic in him spoke, and he added: "But perhaps you have too much rouge."

"Oh, Bobby!" she protested.

"Yes, a little too much. You should be pale, white, like a flower, mysterious." He brought out his handkerchief, and drawing her to him he wiped away the false bloom.

"You are too beautiful to need it," he said, answering the protest in her eyes, and bending his head he kissed her, bringing the radiant colour to her face in a rosy glow.

Together they walked about the studio, when suddenly she stopped with a little cry of surprise.

"What is this?" she asked, pointing to a figure of Buddha squatting solemnly on a low window-shelf. It was carved in alabaster, a Siamese idol, and its surface was slightly gilded.

"I found it to-day," explained Duncanson, carelessly, "and brought it back in a taxi. It was only eight guineas."

Isabel stared at it a moment, then she shivered.

"I can't bear those things; I am afraid of them, they are so unlucky."

"Nonsense, darling. It's a nice piece of work." He patted the idol as he spoke.

"It isn't nice, it's hateful. When I was a little girl I was in India, and I have always had that feeling about those Buddhas ever since."

"I didn't know you were superstitious," he said, absently. Time was getting on, and he had not yet spoken about Cyprienne.

"Won't you please have that horrible thing taken away?" she persisted.

"No, no, I won't encourage you to be silly. Listen, Isabel, I have got something to tell you." He paused a moment, watching the pretty child as she hovered irresolutely by the sinister-looking idol.

"I met Cyprienne to-day, the girl I used to know in Paris, and she seemed rather down on her luck, so I asked her to come in to-night."

Isabel's face changed.

"You asked her, that girl! Oh, Bobby, why?"

"Why not, my dear? It isn't very pleasant to be alone and friendless in London, is it?"

HER lovely face hardened. She was taking it badly. He might have known she would, but he felt confident in his power to bring her to reason if only there was time.

"You know why," she said, averting her eyes. "If you have forgotten, I haven't. I remember all you told me, how you used to go about together, and how—how you cared for her."

"No, Isabel, no," he said; "don't get any ideas of that kind in your head. Do you think I should have asked her here if everything hadn't been square and above-board?"

"But I know, I know," she persisted. "Oh! Bobby, I can't bear it, it will spoil all the pleasure of the evening for me."

"I tell you," he began, angrily; "we were just good friends and often together in those days. I was jolly lonely, too, sometimes. You wouldn't want me to turn my back on her now, you can't expect it. And, Isabel, remember you must be nice to her for my sake, just this once."

He could not have chosen his words worse.

"You had no business to do it," she said. "And I know Lady Hackett and Lily Creath will hate meeting her."

"Lily Creath, your new friend!" he said, scornfully. "Well, if she comes here she must be willing to meet anyone I choose to ask."

She gave him a glance of speechless anger, but there was no time to say more, for a motor was heard to stop outside. He tried to catch her to him with a reassuring word, but she broke away and went to the door.

The orchestra took its place in a corner, and began to play the quick, nervous music of the day. As if by magic the dimly-lit studio was quickened into life by the brightly-dressed people, their laughing chatter humming in rhythm with the music.

They were in all the endless varieties of costumes, the extravagant hues of their dress glinting in a fine effect, and contrasting sharply, to please the keen eye of the host. It was an intoxicating make-believe world into which they entered, giving wing to jest and folly, and bringing the light heart which beats its message to the cap and bells.

Duncanson led the way to the punch-bowl, and before long the dark floor of the studio swung with vivacious humanity, a hundred of all sorts come to make merry.

A small, slight woman worked her way towards the painter. She was very French,

with a black satin dress and a three-cornered hat, and she was beautifully shod.

"Cyprienne!" was Duncanson's greeting, and at once they spoke in French, he with the British accent, and she with the soft, swift manner of the Parisienne.

"It was kind of you to invite me. It is a wonderful *soirée*."

"Have you seen my wife?" asked Robert, awkwardly.

"*Mais oui*," answered Cyprienne. "She is very pretty, but she was not glad to see me."

"Nonsense, Cyprienne, of course she was glad. And how are you getting on?" he asked, as he gave her a glass of punch, which she sipped daintily.

"Not bad. I am a *vendeuse* in a *modiste's* in Hanover Square. I can live at least. And you, you are now a success," she went on, her large dark eyes fixed on the dancing guests.

"And these smart people," she murmured. "I heard their names at the door, and then I thought of the Bobby of the olden days, a student in Paris."

"Those were happy days, too." Duncanson smiled over his remembrances. "And you were so good to me! What a rotten conceited kid I must have been!"

"You were a dear *gamin*," said the girl. "I always knew you would do well for yourself. You were so independent, so frank, so intelligent."

"Oh, very!" laughed the artist. "I had cheek, if that's what you mean."

"*Du toupé, oui.*"

THEY were absorbed in their reminiscences; and a few yards off Isabel watched them, her lips trembling, a dull sense of resentment growing in her heart. How dared she lean towards Bobby in this way, as if—as if he belonged to her! She stood, dazed and motionless, watching them, near enough to see every gesture, yet out of earshot.

"You remember," said Duncanson, "when I started on a huge canvas, and you posed for me as the Spirit of France? That was cheek, if you like! I was one-and-twenty at the time."

"Yes," rallied the Frenchwoman; "but I also remember that you did not paint me in a red, white, and blue robe. Even then you were original."

They stood at the buffet, on the fringe of the one-stepping masqueraders. They seemed to be away from the frivolous present, back again in Paris when both were young and romantic and visionary.

"I never thought I should see you again," she said. "I am glad and sorry: glad that you are happy, and sorry because it hurts me to see it."

"Hurts you!" he repeated, stupidly.

"Yes. When a woman like me loves, it is for ever."

"I am sorry," he said. "Don't tell me I have behaved badly to you. It is difficult now to remember what I said: it seems like another world. No, no, I don't mean that, dear," he added, hastily; "only don't lay a remorse upon me that perhaps I don't deserve."

"No," she said, "there is no need for that. I always knew it was hopeless, and there is much consolation. Just to have loved you without return is a great memory for me."

"Let's be friends," said Duncanson, moved and bewildered by this sudden resurrection of the past. But even as he spoke he knew it was impossible; she must step out of his life, as long ago he had stepped into hers. They were ships that pass in the night, and even now he had talked to her too long. For the music had stopped with a noisy crash, and out of the disappearing throng stepped Isabel Duncanson, followed by two resplendent women. Cyprienne drew back a step, her black eyes fixed on Isabel as the latter spoke to her husband.

"You know Lady Hackett, Robert, and Mrs. Creath?"

Her voice was strained, and the little face from which he had wiped the rouge was dead white. She had come to interrupt as well as to introduce; in fact, she could not keep away from the side of the man who for the first time was torturing her.

Lady Hackett was a marvellous vision so far as her attire was concerned, and without being asked she at once put Robert in possession of the fact that she was Queen Carnival. She was in tissue of gold, a forest of paradise plumes in her hair, and a great row of pearls, that must have been worth a fortune, round her neck.

On the other hand, Mrs. Creath was very subdued in a velvet cloak with three capes, a short mask from which her black eyes gleamed, and a small hat.

"How amusing!" observed this lady, turning to her hostess. "What lovely costumes!" And then the two women whispered together, while Mrs. Creath gave vent to rippling laughter that might have been admiration or mockery.

Suddenly obeying an impulse, and oblivious of Isabel's almost passionate gaze, the painter drew Cyprienne forward and effected an introduction. The French girl made her pretty little bow and smiled, showing a flash of white teeth as Duncanson alluded to their old friendship; but Lady Hackett gave the rude stare that passed with her for dignity, while Mrs. Creath looked closely at Cyprienne, as if recalling a memory.

"Haven't I seen you somewhere before?"

"Around the gallery the revellers raced. Once on the floor again the momentum increased. woman's voice.

Then there was a crash—a scream—and pleasure had vanished. "My pearls!" cried a "Oh, my pearls!"

she asked. "Have you been in England long, or have we met abroad?"

"I saw Madame yesterday," replied Cyprienne, "when she came to Valerie's to see their sable coat."

"Really? Were you looking at it also?"

"No, Madame, I was the *vendeuse;* I had the pleasure of showing you the coat, and almost the pleasure of selling it to you, but the price was too high."

"Ah, to be sure! Fancy your being there! I could no more afford that coat than fly."

If anyone was embarrassed, it was not Cyprienne, and Duncanson felt a glow of admiration for her so great that he tried to catch Isabel's eye to share the feeling with her. He did indeed exchange a look, but hers was so peculiar that it baffled him.

To make a diversion he helped Lady Hackett to some punch, saying, "Whatever you do, you must not leave before we dance the Sarabande."

"What on earth is that?" asked Lady Hackett.

"Oh, it's just a rag; we dance it after supper. It is like cracking the whip. You will stay for it?"

"Of course we will, we have only just come." Lady Hackett turned to Mrs. Creath. "You will stay too, Lily?"

"I should love it," answered Mrs. Creath, as she was whirled away; and Robert, encircling the generous waist of Lady Hackett, left Isabel alone. She watched her guests, especially Cyprienne, and her gaze was one of strange and firm dislike. Then she herself was claimed as a partner, and everyone danced till supper.

"The Sarabande now!" cried the artist, standing up among the others, many of whom were sitting on the floor in the dearth of chairs. He walked to his drum and beat it, repeating "The Sarabande! Choose your partners!"

THERE were murmurs of inquiry as the revellers put aside their plates and glasses and ranged themselves in a chaotic group in the middle of the studio. Duncanson ordered the candle lights to be extinguished, so that only two great Persian lanterns showed palely from the high ceiling. Then he called out for everyone to tread the Sarabande. The orchestra began to play weird march music with muted strings. Isabel saw all her guests apportioned before she took her place, yet in the dimness she could just see the French girl dancing with her husband.

"Ready to go!" cried Duncanson. This was a signal for the lanterns overhead to yield their pallid lights. The studio was almost in darkness, so that the forms moved ghostily to the rhythm of the strange music. Perhaps the starlight percolated through the windows of the roof, but the mysterious effect was very fine, and there were little cries of approval.

Faster and faster the orchestra intoned the music. Duncanson led the guests backwards and forwards, and his sharp twists sent the end of the line reeling and pitching. He steadied it by dashing up the staircase, leading the crew. Around the gallery the revellers raced, picturesque, amused, bewildered. Down again they ran, amid much confusion. Once on the floor again the momentum increased. Then there was a crash—a scream—and pleasure had vanished.

"What is it?" cried Duncanson. "Anyone hurt?"

"My pearls!" cried a woman's voice. "Oh, my pearls!"

"Turn up the lights!" said the painter, authoritatively.

Isabel was still on the staircase when the two lanterns twinkled once more, and the waiters with tapers touched the candles into light.

There stood Lady Hackett, speechless, suddenly the centre of a group; one hand clutching at her neck in a gesture of despair.

Isabel came slowly to her side.

"My pearls are gone!" said Lady Hackett, half sobbing.

"Gone? Impossible! You mean the string has broken," said Duncanson. He seized a candle and began looking about on the floor.

"They're gone, I tell you I felt someone take them just as something broke."

Everyone looked towards the floor, where lay the decapitated Buddha. Only Isabel remained unmoved. She was staring at Cyprienne with a strange expression in her eyes.

"Where are my pearls?" cried Lady Hackett again. "I had them a moment ago. Oh, how cruel! How wicked!"

Duncanson swore below his breath, aghast at the turn the festivities had taken.

"Are you sure you wore them?"

"Perfectly sure," answered the frenzied woman. "It was during that dance with the lights out that someone seemed to come from behind, just as we reached the studio again. It was someone with gloves."

None of the men and few of the women were wearing gloves; and as one looked at the other, Isabel stared again at the soft black suède with which Cyprienne's arms and hands were dressed.

"The waiters," suggested somebody in a low voice.

"They were at the other end of the room," Duncanson said. He brought a chair for Lady Hackett, who was trembling violently; and Mrs. Creath came to her side, and murmured to her in a low voice.

"Mr. Duncanson," said Lady Hackett, "my pearls have been stolen."

As if in a flash Duncanson knew that this idea had been suggested to her by Mrs. Creath.

"It is impossible," he said, angrily.

"But it is so. They are not on my neck, they are not on the floor. I believe everyone ought to be searched."

"No, no," said Mrs. Creath. "Leave it to Mr. Duncanson, dear."

"No one shall be searched in my house," said Duncanson. "I would not submit my friends to such an indignity even if they were willing. I would rather make up the loss to you in some other way."

The tension was terrible, when Mrs. Creath spoke again, and it struck Robert that she was relieved.

"Come, my dear, we had better go home. I can't see the use of staying."

"It's all so dreadful!" said Lady Hackett.

The sobered revellers were still looking about, gliding up the stairs hopelessly, and rearranging the furniture. It was as if an evil genius had cast a spell on a fairyland of mirth.

Duncanson saw Lady Hackett to the door, and when he came back he passed Cyprienne on the stairs.

"What a misfortune!" she said. "I am so sorry."

"It isn't the value of the infernal things, Cyprienne. It's the devil amongst us who has put us all in such a position."

"Robert," she whispered, "your wife suspects me."

"You? Good God!"

She gave a pale smile and held out her black-gloved hands.

"I wore gloves, you see. That was the only clue. But all along I have felt it since I came into this room."

"Felt what, my child?" he said, gently.

"Felt that she doubts me and dislikes me. It is very hard, Robert, for she has everything and I have nothing; but I am not a thief. You will take care of my character, Robert? I have nothing but my honesty."

He took her hand in both his and bent over her.

"Such an idea is impossible. I would as soon doubt Isabel. Is that enough?"

She looked at him, and her eyes were luminous, like dark pools of water on which the moonlight shone.

"It is more than enough," she said. "It makes up for everything that you should say that." She glided away among the shadows, and Duncanson returned to the empty studio.

It was a disastrous end to the carnival, and he took Isabel into his arms to express their mutual trouble, but she stiffened and struggled free.

"What do I think? I think your French friend has Lady Hackett's pearls, that's what I think!"

Duncanson fell back a step.

"She is the last person in the world capable of doing such a thing."

"You are very certain," returned Isabel, in a challenging manner.

"I am."

"Why?"

"Because I know Cyprienne."

"You mean you love her."

"Hush, Isabel!" The man put out his hand as if to stem the rising tide of his wife's accusing anger.

"I saw for myself your interest in her. I couldn't hear what you said, but it was all so plain. And you brought her here to disgrace me!"

"You are disgracing yourself now," said Duncanson. "Take care, Isabel. I tell you this girl is nothing to me but a friend, and I require you to believe me. Do you?"

"No."

"Very well," he said, slowly, "that ends it—the dream, I mean. If you don't trust me you don't love me, and that breaks the big link between us."

"Lady Hackett thinks as I do," said Isabel, terrified at his tone, yet too proud to relent. "She wants Cyprienne's address."

"Does she, indeed! Then she won't get it."

"She can easily obtain it from Lily Creath, who knows where the girl works."

This was true, and Duncanson stood aghast.

"Do you mean to say," he said, slowly, "that you will aid and abet these women in trying to take the bread out of her mouth?"

"Well, I don't see why Lady Hackett shouldn't get her pearls back."

He turned away with an eloquent gesture, and Isabel crept upstairs in the moonlight to bed.

EARLY next morning, and without seeing his wife, Robert Duncanson went to see Cyprienne. The day was wet and cold when he went into the French atmosphere of the Bloomsbury house and waited in the chilly drawing-room, very ill-furnished, until Cyprienne came in.

She tried to define a reason for this unexpected visit, and both stood up for an unreasonably long time, while he admired her terra-cotta jumper and spoke of the dismal weather. But this nonsense she stopped of her own accord.

"Tell me, *mon cher*, why have you come? I am due at business in a few minutes, but I will wait all day if there is anything I can do to help you."

He took her two little hands in his.

"Cyprienne, you were right last night. They do suspect you, those two confounded women."

Her face changed and whitened; she tore her hands from his grasp.

"Suspect me of stealing the pearls?" she breathed, clenching her hands.

"Yes, my child."

"And your wife?"

"She, too."

"Then you may tell her, *monsieur*, that I am an honest girl; as honest as she or any of her fine friends."

"I have told her that, Cyprienne." His steady look half disarmed her, but the horror of the accusation was with her still. She walked about the little room, wringing her hands.

"I am a *vendeuse* of frocks," she said; "no thief. It is because I am a *vendeuse* that you are here, I suppose? You have not questioned Mme. Creath, or those other women? And yet, when she, Mme. Creath, looked at that sable coat the other day at the shop where I sell, looked at it and could not afford to buy it, there was a little devil of longing in her eyes. She would have sold her soul, if it had been for sale, that one, to get it. And I, all my life I have done without these things—to think that you should suspect me!"

Robert went up and took her wrists.

"Be quiet!" he said, harshly. "Look at me."

She looked at him, amazed by his tone, subdued by something in his face.

"Never for one moment have I suspected you. Remember what I said last night. I would as soon suspect my wife."

She trembled into tears, but he went on.

"If it is any satisfaction to you to know it, if my wife persists in her accusations, we shall part, she and I, although I love her better than my life. Now you understand why I have come, don't you? You had better go back to Paris until this thing has cleared up. Whatever you need, I will lend you." And he took out a roll of bank-notes and pressed them into her hand. But Cyprienne pushed them back again.

"No, no," she said, "I don't want your money, and I will not run away. All I wanted you have given me, Robert, in your trust and faith. It heals the wound that you made long ago that has hurt so much ever since."

He took her two little hands in his again and kissed first one and then the other. Then he dropped them both and went out into the street, where he bought a newspaper.

A curious time followed: grey, hateful days—Duncanson could never bear to look back on them—when he and Isabel seemed to inhabit different worlds. All in a moment the dream life of love seemed to have gone, although the love itself still throbbed in both their hearts. Yet he could not forgive her for her doubt of him. It was no use, he could not.

SIR BRIAN and Lady Hackett had agreed to keep the theft secret for the present, for Duncanson had seen them and had sworn to get to the bottom of the matter, sworn it with such confidence that he had inspired them with the same belief, although he had not the smallest idea how to set about it; and then the miracle happened.

A few days later he met Mrs. Creath in Bond Street swathed in a rich coat of sables which struck his artist's eye with their peculiar beauty and value. It was a coat fit for an empress, and Duncanson turned and stared after this lady so magnificently protected from the cold of the late winter, and, as he stared, the words she had spoken to Cyprienne at the ill-fated carnival came into his mind.

"I could no more afford such a coat than fly."

Yet only a few weeks after she was able to afford it!

Duncanson was nimble-witted, and forthwith he threw himself into a fascinating occupation. First he sought the advice of a private detective, and most mysteriously they set forth on a tour of the fur merchants in Mayfair. The artist and private inquiry agent then invaded the crowded lanes where pearls are bought and sold at monstrous prices, and they were told of a mysterious sale of five splendid stones by a solicitor on behalf of an embarrassed client. After a few days of much rushing hither and thither Robert Duncanson sought Mrs. Creath at her house near Marble Arch, and caught her, just as she was going out. She was wearing the fur coat, which she held at the collar, as if an unconscious gesture of self-defence, as she murmured a little greeting of surprise.

"I hope I am not in the way," began Duncanson, "but I have pressing business."

"Really? How interesting; business with me!" She sat down, and the cloak slipped from her shoulders and fell about her in luxurious folds on the chair.

"It is about Lady Hackett's pearls," he went on.

"Oh, yes."

"An accusation has been made against one of the guests." Duncanson sat in front of her and looked down searchingly at the handsome, immutable face. She evaded his remark.

"Well, I do hope Minnie Hackett will recover her pearls," she said; "she lunched with me yesterday and she was still frightfully upset."

"Duncanson pulled aside the curtain. 'You see that man?' He indicated a tall figure. 'He represents the police!'"

"Can you imagine who is accused?" asked Duncanson.

"I am afraid not. I knew so few people at your house, even by name," Mrs. Creath explained, sweetly.

"An innocent person, a woman who works for her living, is the one suspected."

"But what is this to do with me?" Mrs. Creath asked, relaxing easily in her chair.

"That is something for you to answer," replied Duncanson, quietly.

"I do not understand."

"Very well. Perhaps I have not been too clear."

Duncanson sat on the edge of the Chesterfield, so that the dark eyes of his companion could not shift so quickly from his gaze.

"I know who is the real thief," he stated, calmly.

She shrugged her shoulders. "Then why don't you spare the innocent woman all this humiliation?"

"Because she, the real thief, has not confessed yet."

Duncanson felt a reflection of the nervousness that was quivering within her; it was like an electric wave agitating the air. However, she spoke quietly enough.

"Why do you come to me, Mr. Duncanson, with all this? I am a busy woman. I am sorry it has happened, but it is no affair of mine."

Duncanson went on immovably.

"Five pearls were sold by a solicitor to a certain pearl-dealer. We knew all that, and that one of the clients of the same solicitor was in a position a day later to buy a most expensive sable coat."

"You make it very difficult for me. I have been your guest so recently."

"Then, by all means, do the easiest thing, Mrs. Creath. It is no use, you must give back the rest of the pearls."

"So you accuse me? *Me*, of stealing Lady Hackett's necklace?" She rushed to the bell. "I am afraid I must ask you to go."

"Wait," cried Duncanson, "before you ring, and hear me out. Do you mind coming to the window?"

Mrs. Creath paused.

"The window?"

Duncanson pulled aside the curtain, and she looked out involuntarily.

"You see that man?" The painter indicated a tall figure in an overcoat and bowler hat, silhouetted against the palings and trees of the square. "He represents the police." Duncanson was impressive. "Don't force me to take any further steps, Mrs. Creath. I assure you I have plenty of evidence to start with, at all events."

She looked at him white-lipped, furious, and yet obviously terrified.

"So you think the Hacketts would permit such an outrage? I shall telephone to them at once."

"I should not do that if I were you," said Duncanson, with grave consideration; "they need never know. I can say the necklace was found in my studio; but the five pearls you sold must be bought back. This is to save you from disgrace."

Mrs. Creath sank on the Chesterfield and covered her face with her hands.

"Oh, Mr. Duncanson, swear, swear to me that no one shall ever know!"

"Why did you do it?" he asked. "It was sheer madness."

"Yes, it was. I was mad. Beautiful things like that almost drive me crazy with longing. It is impossible for a man to understand the awful temptation of clothes to women like me; I could not sleep at night thinking of it. Then, suddenly, came the chance, and it all seemed so simple."

He looked down at her, pondering on the strange depths of human nature hidden away in this fair exterior. Then she got up, and, unlocking her writing-case, took from the drawer the broken string of pearls and handed them to Duncanson.

"Is that all?" she said, brokenly.

"I must have the other five, and have them re-strung."

"It will take every penny I have in the world."

"And be cheap for you at the price."

"There is no other way? How long will you give me?"

"Forty-eight hours."

She stood with bent head in the middle of the room, and, without another word, he turned and left her.

THREE days later he told Isabel that Cyprienne's innocence had been established, and the pearls restored. He imparted these facts quietly, and added:—

"I am waiting for you to apologize to the girl whose good name you took away without a second thought."

Isabel fought with her pride a moment, then she burst into tears.

"I do—I do apologize. Won't you forgive me and love me again?"

Duncanson made no answer. He was sitting by the fire in the big studio, and she crept nearer and knelt at his side.

"Was it so very dreadful, what I did?" she asked, lifting her lovely face to his.

"Yes, it was dreadful. It was a sin against our love. Do you know, Isabel, that if I had not been able to clear Cyprienne, I could not have gone on living here with you, with the thought of all you had tried to do eternally between us."

He saw that she trembled exceedingly and let her head sink lower and lower until it almost rested on his knees. He longed to put his arms around her, but resisted the temptation; something seemed lacking without which their reconciliation could not be perfect. He clutched the arms of his chair and stared ahead, struggling with himself and his love for her. Suddenly he saw that Isabel was pushing a note towards him with her face hidden, and he took it from her trembling hand and read it.

It was from Cyprienne.

MY ROBERT,—I got your letter telling me that the pearls were found, and that you were coming to see me; but before you came I had another visitor—your wife. She opened her heart to me and asked my forgiveness. Robert, she has a child's heart, and it is full of love for you. I am only a shadow; but even shadows may come between two people, so I am going back to the Paris I love. She kissed me before she left. Return that kiss to her, my friend, from CYPRIENNE.

With one swift movement Duncanson gathered his wife to his heart and kissed her mouth. The shadow was past.

Is Modern Ball-Room Dancing Ugly?

One hundred teachers of dancing recently met in London to deliberate on the standardization of dance steps. "Bolshevism is creeping into the ball-room," they said, and an effort is to be made to stamp out the freak, indecorous dances against which there has been an outcry in the Press and Pulpit. Here are a few opinions on the subject sent to us by well-known artistes and exponents of dancing.

ILLUSTRATED BY PHOTOGRAPHS SPECIALLY TAKEN FOR "THE STRAND MAGAZINE."

MR. GEORGE GROSSMITH.

THERE is a certain type of dancer who, when a new dance is invented, promptly proceeds to kill it by introducing all sorts of exaggerated steps and contortions, making it an ugly and immodest series of leg gymnastics which disgust all lovers of real dancing. Many people have condemned the Fox-Trot, Tango, One-Step, Jazz-Twinkle, and other of the latest variations in dances because they have only seen them as vulgar romps. The Tango, for instance, when it was first introduced into this country eleven or twelve years ago, immediately got a bad reputation because of the gyrations of self-styled experts, who simply made the dance ungraceful and disgraceful by their freakish antics.

As a matter of fact, the Tango, when properly danced, is, to my mind, one of the most delightful of dances. The same remark also applies to the Fox-Trot, which, slightly varied with the Tango Corte and the Boston, is perhaps the most popular of all the modern dances.

I must confess, however, that I love the charm and grace of the waltz, the polka, and the most delightful and interesting of all square dances, the lancers. Given good partners, they are the prettiest of all dances to watch and participate in. Which brings me to another point. Good partners can make the ugliest dance pretty. By good partners I mean the man or woman who perfects himself or herself in the main steps of each dance. They do not worry about introducing twists and twirls of their own, a prevalent habit with those who do not realize that the real art of dancing lies in the perfect execution of the simple steps.

MME. ANNA PAVLOVA.

Ball-room dancing is ugly only when dancers make it ugly. I would have two rooms at dances. In one I would place those dancers who wish to exhibit their ignorance of dancing—the people who indulge in the freak steps and exaggerated movements which have brought ball-room dancing into disrepute. In the other I would place the real dancers—the young people who, inspired by good music and love of the art, dance the true movements, and the older people who recognize that the enjoyment of dancing for themselves and others lies in concerted steps and rhythm.

In this way I would try to prevent a young girl's ideas of the true enjoyment of dancing being corrupted. That, to my mind, is the worst feature of the manner in which ball-room dances are so often executed to-day.

A young girl goes to her first private or public dance. Her partner, wishing to display what he considers an up-to-date knowledge of dancing, holds her in a manner to which she has not been accustomed, and proceeds to indulge in steps which confuse her and make her think that there is something lacking in her knowledge of dancing, the truth being that her knowledge is far

An incorrect position in the Fox-Trot. The gentleman's hand should not be placed upon the lady's hip, but between the shoulder-blades. The position of the lady's hand is also wrong.

superior. She can dance in a manner which charms the eye and produces real enjoyment, effects which are totally spoilt by the freakish actions of the partner.

Not that it is always the man who is at fault. Many men who love dancing for its own sake have been disgusted with the ball-room antics of ladies who think it clever to display what they consider up-to-date dancing, but which is distasteful except to the few.

Could they see themselves as they prance, hop, skip, back step, side step, and indulge in a variety of other exaggerated movements which are never practised by the good dancer, they would realize how ugly they appear.

I don't think we can standardize. That would be too automatic. Neither do I think that we shall ever go back entirely to the old style of dances. As in everything else, we must have change and progress. New dances add variety to the fascination of the ball-room, but dancers and teachers who interpret them according to their own exaggerated ideas and freakish notions soon bring them into disrepute.

MR. GEORGE ROBEY.

My opinion of the present-day style of dancing is that it is inartistic, indelicate, and far too theatrical and acrobatic for private purposes. Jazzitis is no doubt the outcome of the war. It enabled people to give vent to their feelings in ungainly caperings in heated atmospheres, to the disgust of all true lovers of dancing.

I am glad to note that there is a tendency to return to the more sane and graceful style of dance that prevailed at the end of the nineteenth century.

Correct position in which the lady's hand should be held in the Fox-Trot.

MISS YVONNE ARNAUD,

The Popular Musical Comedy Actress and Dancer.

I do not think one can say that the modern dancing is any less graceful than the dancing of other days. It is solely what the dancers themselves make of it. The whole thing in dancing of any period is the manner in which it is done.

Even the extremely graceful minuet can be ugly and clumsy if the manner of dancing is bad. If only people would study style instead of steps, it would do away with much of the controversy on this subject.

People in general have lost the real meaning of dancing. As in all dancing, music should inspire one to dance, and the motion should give pleasure and joy.

MR. ROBERT HALE,

The Well-known Comedian.

I feel positive that the reason of the present-day dancing craze is because the dances of to-day require no tuition. There is no grace or charm about them, and the One-Step, Two-Step, Bunny-Hug, and Jazz are of one and the same thing. You glue yourself to your partner, walk about with an occasional turn or a dip or two, and now and again you reverse just to show how really clever you are.

As a matter of fact, it is not dancing at all. Could our great-grandmothers have peeped into the various London social and society clubs while the alleged dances were going on, they would have thought it was a wrestling match to music.

To my mind there is no dance—no modern ball-room dance—which compares with the best of all dances—the minuet—the acme of grace, charm, and beauty.

It is a pity it has given place to dances which, more often than not, offend the eye as well as the taste of all lovers of good dancing. I am sure that out of every hundred of the One-Step brigade, no more than three can waltz or walk either. If they could waltz, they would not desire to participate in the freak steps and contortions which go by the name of dances nowadays.

The "lift"—an ugly movement which is to be discouraged.

Another view of the same pose, shown opposite, demonstrating the correct position for the gentlemen's right hand—*i.e.*, between the lady's shoulders.

MDLLE. ENID BRUNOVA,

Engaged with Mme. Anna Pavlova.

It is a great pity so many ugly and exaggerated steps are used nowadays in ball-room dancing. They are not graceful, and are absolutely lacking in rhythm. The trouble is that so many dancers introduce steps of their own, that the grace, charm, and enjoyment of ball-room dancing is destroyed. Those who dance for dancing's sake, and for the love of the art, are never guilty of such offences, and make every dance, whether it is the One-Step, Tango, Fox-Trot, Veleta, or Maxina, the poetry of motion.

We have heard much about the exaggerated dances introduced from America, but, in my opinion, Americans dance very nicely. Their movements are simpler and have more restraint. (I do not mean, of course, the exponents of the extraordinary so-called American dances, which, after all, are only freak movements.)

A common fault in the Waltz—the hands should not be raised above the level of the shoulders.

One of the most charming dances I have seen is the Argentine Tango, as danced in Argentina. It is a simple variation of the ordinary Tango, and I hope one day it will become popular in England.

But this dance, like others, will become ugly unless properly executed by those who really love dancing.

MR. EDWARD SCOTT,

The Author of "Dancing as it Should Be" and "Dancing in All Ages."

It may, I think, be freely admitted that much of the dancing now practised is lacking in that ease, elegance, and propriety of action which we are accustomed to associate with the idea of gracefulness. There is, however, one consolatory reflection, Although some aspects of social dancing are still to be deprecated from an æsthetic standpoint, morally the style now in vogue is less objectionable than was that which obtained in the years immediately preceding the war. For one thing, the suggestive *mouvement des hanches*, or hip-swaying action, is now rarely if ever to be seen at any decent dance; certainly it would not be tolerated in any pronounced degree.

There is now, happily, a decided reaction in favour of waltzing. The dances of the past few seasons have for the most part been mere names, to which the partners execute whatever steps they happen to know. As the ordinary ball-room performer has but a limited stock from which to draw, it follows that there is very little variety in his dancing, and the same steps do duty for all dances, no matter by what names they may be called.

Our young composers have become so strangely obsessed by the spirit of ragtime that they seem to have lost all perception of what is truly rhythmic in dance music. The absolute elimination of the ragtime element would go far towards bringing about a better style of ball-room dancing.

There is no special clearly-defined rhythm to what is called the "Fox-Trot," but about the rhythm of the waltz there can be no possible mistake. The music, though in triple time, like the mazurka and minuet, has a special, distinctive lilt by which it is easily distinguished from other three-time measures.

My personal conviction is that dancers are weary of irregular movement to rhythmless music, and I would suggest that hostesses and arrangers of public dances should try the experiment of getting the band to play a few simple dance melodies of definite and distinctive rhythm, such as the waltz, polka, schottische, and mazurka. The music of these dances if well marked, almost tells a dancer with any knowledge of the art what steps to employ, and he would be free to introduce reasonable variations if he felt so disposed. Besides, there would always be the beautiful triple waltz-step for dancers who did not know what others to use.

MR. LEONARD FISHER,

Britain's Premier Ball-Room Dancer.

In my opinion, modern ball-room dancing is very far from ugly; but modern dancers try very hard to make it so by the introduction of steps which are out of place in the ball-room. A few slides or exaggerations, if done properly, help one to enjoy the dance much more than a set number of steps. Of course, the old school at once cry "Freak steps. We must stop them—they will lower the tone and dignity of

dancing." But who in our democratic day wants to appear dignified?

It is the joy of the dance that matters to most of the dancers. Cut out high-heel kicking by all means. The ball-room is not the place for steps of that description. But good, kind dancing teachers, please do not try to make us standardized. Let us have a little novelty and originality in our dances. We were given standard suits; nobody wears them. Somebody told us to eat standard bread; nobody eats it. If you standardize dances, nobody will want to dance them, except the prim and proper persons who think you ought to dance without a smile.

MISS PHYLLIS BEDELLS,

The English Première Danseuse.

In my opinion, modern ball-room dances, when danced well, are not ugly, and they are certainly amusing and delightful to dance. There are, however, always certain people who spoil them by exaggerating their steps and style to make themselves conspicuous in the ball-room. This, in my opinion, is unforgivable, but I have no doubt that they would do the same with any dances; and that a decade ago there were spoilers too. It is not the dances themselves that are ugly, but the people who, with eccentric and freakish steps, make them appear so.

The correct position for the waltz.

MISS IVY ST. HELIER,

Of the Alhambra Theatre.

I love dancing—real dancing—whether of to-day or a decade ago, but freak-dancing—the very name suggests a counterfeit of the genuine thing.

The real lover of dancing, with dancing in her soul as well as in her feet, objects to travesties of an art symbolic in itself (or it should be) of the joy of living.

All exaggeration is inartistic, as the imagination ceases at once to be focused on the thing itself, but rather on its perversion. As long as dancing is real dancing, a spirit truthfully interpreted, it is uninfluenced by the vagaries of fashion—a thing joyous and unchanging as the Spirit of Youth.

MR. MAURICE,

The Famous Society Ball-Room Dancer.

Dancing is the most beautiful art in the world. Unfortunately it has been spoiled, and is still being spoiled, by people who insist on introducing freak and exaggerated steps into it. There is a certain type of dancer who thinks he is doing something wonderful by showing freak steps.

There is too much exaggeration in the dancing. Both men and women seem to delight in putting in all kinds of fancy steps and hesitations, upsetting the harmony and rhythm of the ball-room, much to the discomfort of their fellow-dancers.

Thank goodness these antics do not appeal to the best dancers. The plain, simple ball-room dancing is the real foundation of all dancing, and I would like to see more of the waltz and the old-time dances. Freak steps are not only ugly, but they are a nuisance, particularly in a crowded ball-room.

Dance properly, no matter what the dance may be, and the world will dance with you. Dance improperly, and you disgust all lovers of the art.

People who wish to dance well—and by that I mean become artists of time, rhythm, and grace—must pay the greatest attention to the way they hold themselves, to their facial expression, and, above all, to the way they use their feet.

I find that most English people have a good idea of rhythm, which is the greatest factor in dancing, but their better judgment has been warped by the horrible exaggeration I have referred to. To my mind,

Vernon Castle was one of the cleverest ball-room dancers in the world, and he was an Englishman.

I have seen very few men hold their partners in the correct way. A man obviously cannot possibly have full control over his partner if he extends his left hand with hers and places the other on the hip, as I have so often seen done. The correct place for the man's right hand is between his partner's shoulder-blades.

At the same time, I do not think we shall ever go back to the old set dances. The tendency is to advance—to dance at one's individual inclination instead of automatically.

But we should not have this talk about Bolshevism in the ball-room if dancers would cultivate the real art of dancing instead of the ugly, exaggerated steps about which there is such an outcry.

MAJOR CECIL H. TAYLOR,

President of the Imperial Society of Dancing Teachers.

While teachers of dancing are determined to banish from the ball-room those exaggerated steps which are the reverse of beautiful and bring dancing into disrepute, there is no desire or intention to standardize the dance as a whole. We do not believe in sequence dances. During the past season one saw nothing except One-Steps, Fox-Trots, and valses in our smart circles—and each usually consisted of the same three simple movements, the difference in tempo alone making a slight change. Let us be candid with one another. Take the One-Step and the Fox-Trot. Closely examine the popular steps, and it must be agreed there is little or nothing in them. Then it may be asked, "Why are they so popular?" and the answer is simple—"The music." Every tune is a tune, and usually very catchy at that. Both dances are practically a mixture of the old One-Step, Two-Step, and schottische.

Many have condemned the so-called Jazz dances. There is no such thing as a Jazz step in any of them. The band does the Jazzing—and this could easily be dispensed with to the advantage of the dance and the dancer. Modern dances are easy to acquire and pleasing to perform. They do not exhaust one. They are even graceful, but, of course, can be abused, when they become distinctly ugly—but this is very seldom done in decent circles.

In the best circles, no matter whether it be in Britain, in France, or America, present-day dancing is extremely good, and one might say the dances do not vary in the least. During a recent visit to Paris I went to several of the smartest hotels and famous dance *salons*, where one meets the best of English, American, and Continental people, all thoroughly enjoying the dance, and it struck one at once that so similar were the steps and movements of the dancers that it could have been imagined that they had all been taught at the same school. Every second dance was a Tango—but what a different Tango to what one knew in 1913! To-day it is simple, progressive, and devoid of all lifting, bending, and dipping—just a graceful, pleasing dance with music most entrancing. This Tango added to the evening's enjoyment. On some programmes was the "Espagnole Schotis," or Spanish Schottische—again a simple, quiet measure of the Fox-Trot family, but slower. At one place only did the "Shimmy" appear. I was astounded. It was disgusting.

One thing is absolutely certain, and that is, something new must be introduced, otherwise there will soon be monotony in our ball-rooms. To revert to dances of a decade ago is impossible. What was there in the old-fashioned waltz to attract the present-day dancer? Nothing. It was monotonous and tiring. The lancers became a romp, the barn dance and schottische are replaced by more up-to-date sisters in the One-Step and Fox-Trot. Dancing is always beautiful, but that which is not dancing, but passed off as such, is ugly in the extreme, and often objectionable in its character.

Dancing is an art, and must be treated in a scientific manner. There is nothing wrong with the dances of to-day. They compare more than favourably with those of the past two decades. To sum up: Dances of to-day are certainly not ugly if danced as taught by teachers of repute and good training. The rolling or swaying of the shoulders or upper part of the body is altogether wrong, and is never done by good dancers. A knowledge of steps alone is useless without a good style. Dancers should make a point of studying those who possess this qualification and endeavour to copy it.

A LIFE THAT CAME TO FLOWER

By

M·L·C·Pickthall

Illustrated by W. Hatherell, R.I.

BONA DEARDEN, holding Mrs. Esterel's little hand within her arm, paced slowly up and down the room. It was a spacious room, mingling simplicity and luxury; and it gave on a spacious world of lake, beach, and infinite sky. Bona Dearden was a tall woman, no longer young; the years had been kind, Mrs. Esterel thought, to her rich, rugged comeliness. She had never been beautiful, though she possessed much of the raw material out of which beauty is made, just as she possessed much of the raw material out of which happiness is made. Mrs. Esterel, whose seventy years had only added tenderness to insight, wondered if she had failed of happiness as well.

"It's strange, Bona," said little Mrs. Esterel, "to be with you again after fifteen years! I went with you to the Home, you remember, the very day you brought Chris away. And now here I am, and you are expecting him back from the yachting trip with the Seldens. My dear, what will he look like?"

Bona Dearden smiled down at her tiny godmother, and led her to a table where stood a silver-framed photograph. "This," she said, "is very good of Chris."

Mrs. Esterel adjusted her eye-glasses. "You had great good fortune," she said after a moment, a little tremulously, "great good fortune, my dear."

"I had great good fortune," repeated Bona Dearden, gravely.

The young face looking out of the frame was grave; it was a quiet face, showing resistant strength; an obstinate chin corrected an over-sweet mouth; the eyes were good, and distinction was added by dark irregular brows, swept on as by a last touch. Under it was written "Dear Bona, from C. D." And that same face, in all stages of youthfulness, met the gaze from every wall of the room. Here was C. D. in fancy dress, C. D. in flannels, C. D. in a hockey team, C. D. in splendid isolation and his first long trousers; and always beneath the faithful inscriptions—"To dear Bona," "With love to Bona," "Bona, from hers ever, C. D." Mrs. Esterel laughed softly.

"You told me in your letters that he always called you Bona," she said; "but, my dear, it seems a little—— Why?"

"He asked if he might. Because he said it meant 'good,' and I had been good to him."

Some curious restraint in Bona's voice made the old woman glance at her quickly, and say, "I understand. A dear boy, Bona, and so grateful."

"Yes, always grateful—the last thing, Godmother, that I wanted him to be!"

After a silence Mrs. Esterel said, gently, "What did you want, Bona?"

"I—wanted to make him entirely mine. I wanted him to—take it all for granted, I suppose, as he would have if he'd been my own son! His gratitude sets me far off, somehow. I can't explain. But you can see it in his face in that picture."

What, my dear?"

"The consciousness of a debt." She turned abruptly from the table. "He'd do anything for me," she said, unevenly, "out of gratitude. He doesn't think of anything, I believe, but paying me back—by success, by work, by the most—delightful affection." Her voice broke, to her own dismay. "If I were his mother——"

"If you were his mother," said Mrs. Esterel, "he would know, by this time, that he *couldn't* pay you back."

Across the space of fifteen years the two women looked at each other.

At last Bona raised her hands and dropped them in a sudden gesture of defeat. She

sat down on a couch. "What do you mean?" she said.

Mrs. Esterel sat beside her, took Bona's strong, beautiful hands in her own little, withered ones. "What did you say," she went on, "when you first mentioned this plan to me, years ago? You came to me, Bona, holding out these hands of yours. And you said, 'Godmother, I've just realized they're empty. Empty! I am going to fill them for myself, as God hasn't seen fit to do so.' Do you remember?"

"Yes."

"You said, 'I am going to take a little boy from the Home. I am going to make him mine. It will be absolutely as if he were my own, in all ways.' Do you remember?"

"Yes."

"And I said then, 'Bona, you cannot do that. You have no right to expect so much.'"

"'*Why?*" asked Bona Dearden now, passionately, defiantly, as she had asked it then. "*Why?* It seems so—unjust! I've done everything, everything, that his own mother could have done. I've loved him, thought for him, sorrowed over him, worked and *lived* for him——"

"You've lived for him, dear child. You have not given him life."

Answered by nothing but silence, she went on again, "You told me then, Bona dear, 'I will replace the bond of the flesh by a stronger one of the spirit'—Bona, have you done that? Have you succeeded?" She took the silence for a reply; it seemed to tell her what she wanted to know. She lifted one of Bona's hands and touched it to her sweet old lips. "You see, my dear," she said, softly, "he's cost you nothing but these things—thought, care, money. You haven't paid *yourself*. You haven't the claim——"

She said again, tremulously, "You see, my dear, we have to be jealous of our privileges—we other ones!" And at last Bona Dearden faced Mrs. Esterel steadily.

"You are right," she said, "and I was wrong. I've failed. Oh, not entirely, of course; and only you and I know that I have failed at all. Chris gives me a special affection, a special consideration—I told myself that it would be like—having borne a son, losing him, somehow forgetting him, and then—having him returned—that it would be like that with Chris and me. He would be mine. I should only have to re-create my claim in him—I used all my intelligence, Godmother, but—the claim wasn't there.

"It was like calling continually to someone who was deaf—I can't explain. He did not even see my—hands held out, empty. He was so sweet, too; always so sweet to me. But the innermost Chris I couldn't touch, I couldn't lay hold of, I've scarcely even seen. I am—outside—and he doesn't dream of it.

"I have been so careful—so careful to force no confidence, to ask for nothing as my right. He gives me more than I ever asked. And every year, for all his gratitude and sense of obligation"—she laughed impatiently—"we're farther apart, know less of each other, *feel* less of each other. If it goes on—if I can't find the way of bridging and overcoming this strange deficiency in our relation, there will come the day—soon, Godmother, soon!—when I'll lose Chris altogether. For gratitude's not enough to hold by. You want the inner link, the inseparable tie—the claim! And I haven't it—*gratitude!*" She turned a flushed, fierce face on the older woman. "If he'd just—once—fling his arms round me and call me 'Mother'! He's never thought of it!"

She rose and went to the wide window. "I haven't the right, you see," she said over her shoulder, "but each time he's come home through all these years, I've—hoped he was going to do it. But I haven't the claim. I've done everything but suffer for him." Her voice changed. She said, eagerly, "Godmother, he's coming home now!" Mrs. Esterel joined her at the window. Bona pointed out across the lake, to where, at meeting-place of sky and water, something twinkled intolerably pure as a star. "That's the Seldens' yacht homeward-bound," she said; "that's the *Gloriana!*"

THE two women stepped out on the broad veranda together.

Little was visible from the old Dearden house but lake and sky. The shore was a ribbon of silver-smooth sand, backed by a pine-grown height, and looping away mile after mile into the mild September haze. The Seldens' summer home was hidden five miles away round the point; and the level beaches between were never lonely for Bona, so peopled were they by memories of Chris; those tideless gleaming shores were invisibly written with a hundred little histories. Happy histories; but remembrance discovered in them melancholy as well; his little departures, his sunny returns, were weighed against her need, and found wanting.

And now once more he was coming home to her. The yacht's starry topsails climbed above the far blue verge. Presently they saw her spreading an argent breast to the evening sun. The sun dipped, the light grew golden, she became a vast bird with silver pinions and feathers of gold. The light failed, fell; under the first large stars the two women still stood on the high veranda, watching the glimmering canvas towering towards the shore.

"The two women stepped out on the broad veranda together."

At last Mrs. Esterel spoke. "Where will they put in?"

"At the Seldens' wharf. Chris told me he would have to wait there for supper. He'll borrow a horse from Garry and ride over."

"I don't remember the Seldens, Bona. Who are they?"

"Nice people. Wealthy, but pleasant in all their ways and works. I have been very glad to have them near as friends for Chris. They bought the land round the point and built a big house there the year after I took Chris. Garry Selden was his first chum, and is still his best one."

Mrs. Esterel slowly shook her head. "I remember you often spoke of them in your letters. I can't, somehow, recall *them*——"

"A little girl of eight," said Bona at once, "in a peacock-blue linen dress, with a white rabbit in a birdcage which she had brought over to show Chris——"

Mrs. Esterel exclaimed, "I remember!" She said, softly, "Little Lucy Selden! The loveliest child I ever saw in my life! I remember them all now, through remembering her."

"No one who has ever seen Lucy Selden has ever forgotten her."

"So beautiful, and Lucy Selden still?"

"Married to a cousin. It is said, very unhappily. She went part of this cruise with them, but they were to land her at Seagrove to rejoin her husband." Bona Dearden spoke absently. Her eyes were fixed on the horizon where the yacht had soared into vision, beautiful itself, and freighted with the beautiful stuff of youth. In silence the two women, the old and the no longer young, went into the house together.

THE evening passed very slowly for Bona. Mrs. Esterel went to bed early. Bona sat and waited for Chris. Her imagination ran forward to meet his coming; and, as always, from the shining pinnacle of her pictured desire it fell back unsatisfied. She heard the beloved voice calling her, but not by the name for which she yearned. He would gaily tell her things, but not, she sometimes felt, the things that mattered. He would defer to her, spare her—even the knowledge of his own young troubles. She fancied his step on the stairs, rough arms round her, his voice in her ear, "Mother, oh, Mother!" She knew it would not be so. And for all she was waiting for him with a happy heart, her dark lashes glimmered with tears. He was not her own; her talk with Mrs. Esterel had given substance to the unembodied disappointment of her later years; she supposed she must take what he could give and be grateful——

She sprang to her feet with an angry movement of her strong body. Gratitude! It threatened to be a wall between them. Again the sense of defeat touched her. But she forgot it. She heard, far away in the windy night, a little dull sound like a pulse beating. "Chris!" she said, softly, and ran to the window like a girl.

The moon was high, but veiled with a thin fleeting scud that seemed itself luminous. And the foam along the beaches made a luminous line, and the sands shone lustrous as if they would reflect the few large stars. A wind was blowing off the land, heavy from sun-warmed pinewoods and hidden marshes. Land and lake seemed to blow with the wind, a glimmer, an endless passing, unchanging in outline but fluid in substance. Nothing showed in this drifting night but the single light on the end of Seldens' wharf, five miles away, where the *Gloriana* had been safely moored an hour and more ago. Nothing could yet be seen on the gleam and shadow of the sands. But that thudding of a tiny pulse was louder in Bona's ears. She knew it for the steady beat of a horse's hoofs. Laughing a little, a little flushed, she threw a long spangled scarf across her head, and ran out of the house. She was going to wait for the boy at the gate.

Her heart, as she leaned over the gate with the hushed garden and the dark square of the house behind her, was the heart of youth; for want will often keep a woman younger than will content. The land-wind loosened her hair, her eyes questioned the tender night. Out of the night that steady hoof-beat answered her; power, swiftness, youth were in the sound. "He's coming," she breathed, "and old Mulberry was too slow for him. He's borrowed Challenger!" It was lovely to her that the boy should be in such haste to be home.

The sound swept nearer along the glimmering sands. Soon she could see horse and rider, a dark blot between the foam and the moon. The dull thud and thunder of the great horse's speed seemed for a moment ominous, like the resistless onsweep of a storm. Then she laughed at herself. "He's coming at the gallop," she said. "What a boy he is!"

Yet when he had come; when she had opened the gate, and he had ridden through it; when he held Challenger still, and sat himself silent in the saddle, stilly looking down at her; in that appalled moment her one clear thought was that her boy was gone. It was a man's face the moon showed her; the face of a man she did not know.

"Chris——"

She thought his lips moved as if he said "Bona." She went to him. The horse quivered and started at her approach. She laid a hand grown cold on Chris's knee, and felt him somehow unresponsive as if she had

touched the saddle leather. She trembled, but was perfectly quiet. She said, "My dear, what's happened? Tell me."

He said as quietly, "Nothing has happened—yet. I have come to tell you what is going to happen." He paused, and there came to her ears the voices of wind and foam, a whisper as of pity fallen from the stars. "Lucy Selden and I are going away together."

She stood, in a stunned silence, staring at him. She was afraid. She had never known fear of another human being in her strong life; and now she was suddenly afraid of Chris—her Chris!

He went on, in a hard, matter-of-fact voice: "No one else knows. I preferred that you should hear it from me, and not in the way you're sure to hear of it later. We have loved each other for a year. Lately, things have grown—unbearable—such suffering for her, and for me through her. We arranged it all on board the yacht. I am riding on to Seagrove to-night, and she will be ready for me. We shall leave on the twelve-forty-nine. The rest you'll learn soon enough."

After a minute she said, brokenly, out of the ruin and crash of things, "Chris, you *cannot* do it!"

"Can't I?" He still looked at her quietly, unmoved; she could feel no break in his sudden armour of resolution. "I don't know anything on earth that's strong enough to hinder me."

"Won't pity hinder you?—pity for the Seldens, for her husband, for her, for yourself?—or for me?"

He answered, with a kind of wonder, "*You* have no power to stop me."

"Oh, my dear, have I no claim on you at all?"

He said at once, quite calmly, "You mean I forget all that I owe you? I never forget. I owe you everything, of course, down to the clothes on my back and the name you lent me. But—what do I owe her—Lucy——?"

"She's chosen wrongly, but her husband is fond of her in his way. She is not disciplined to grief yet, Chris. She's choosing wrongly again. Won't it move you to think of him, of the Seldens? They are the old sort of people, Chris, good people. This will half kill them."

"If the thought of you does not move me, is it likely the thought of them will?"

"Think of me, then!" She stood back a little, drew herself to her height, faced him bravely. But the minutes, she desperately felt, were building between them as stones in the opening of a door. Soon it would be sealed for ever. "Do you realize what this will cost me?"

He said, almost gently, "Yes."

"Doesn't that weigh with you at all?"

Using her name for the first time, he answered, still more gently, "Bona, it will be the first time I have ever cost you anything that matters." She looked at him helplessly; and he went on with a quick heat and energy, "No, I know you don't understand. You have done everything for me, and I've been grateful all my life. Now I've come to a place where gratitude doesn't count. You've never had to pay, soul and body, hope and strength, for the chance of doing something for anyone, have you? No, I know you haven't. So do you, if you're honest. I know what I'm doing, what I'm paying. It just doesn't count. I'm *glad* to pay—to the uttermost. But you won't be able to understand that."

"I would pay to the uttermost, Chris, to keep you from doing this wrong. If you think of none of us—think, again, of yourself! Oh, boy, my hopes for you—your position, your chances, your career! Thrown away——"

"I'll be *my own*, anyway!"

She winced, amazed at the bitter speech. How little she had known, how little she had guessed! She held herself in hand as if he were drowning before her eyes, and she with the one chance to save him; she could have screamed to the house for help. Desperately she searched her own passionless experience, her smooth level of unfulfilled days, for the appeal that might touch him, break him, turn him in time. She found nothing. She had no hold, no claim, strong enough to hold him now. She forgot everyone but him. She was alone in the glimmering, secret night, pleading with him, passionately, despairingly; pleading with this man who was a stranger to her; fatally, hopelessly a stranger.

"Chris, Chris, think again of what you lose!"

"I've nothing of my own to lose. It's all yours. And I'm ready to lose everything but her."

"I'm so lost, so bewildered, Chris. I have been thinking of you as a boy, my boy—I find it hard to know what to say, or to think of anything but you. But remember what *she* loses. Have you thought of that?"

"We have both thought."

Yes, she saw that was true. She saw the ruthless working of something implacable and reasoned, that yet was beyond any appeal of reason. Chris seemed of a sudden years older than she. And she stood outside, outside! She said, calmly, "Won't you give me a chance—dismount and come into the house, at least, and listen to me?"

"I can't. I'd lose the train—— And you'd have no chance. Don't you realize that I'd never have come to tell you this if you'd had a chance of stopping me?"

She stood beside him, dumb, defeated, but

fighting still. If the years had brought her nothing else, they had brought her wisdom. She saw the fatal mistakenness of what he was going to do, at that moment, even more clearly than the wrong of it; he was not strong enough to stand alone, friendless, against those who had been his friends, poor lad; to carve out a footing for himself unhelped, with the disastrous dead-weight of Lucy Selden and her inevitable regrets about his neck. The pity of it, oh, the pity! The defiance, the struggle, the slow descent, the acquiescence at last—she raised her face. She said, very gently, "Chris, I'm weeping for you."

He looked at her with a faint smile. "Will you believe I'm sorry? Some day, probably, I shall be sorrier—— But it's the first time you have—wept for me."

"It will not be the last! Oh, my dear, *think!* All I ask you is to wait and think. I say nothing of her, poor, unenduring, beautiful child! I only pray you to wait—a few hours—a few days——"

She was weeping wildly. Perhaps his hardness was troubled by her tears. His voice was less controlled as he said, "Bona, it's no good. I'll not wait. Nothing will make me wait or stop me."

"Nothing? Nothing, Chris? I'll stop you! You *shall not* go!"

She scarcely knew what she said. She was clinging to him, blinded with tears. She saw anger in his face, and was glad of it; anything but that unshaken resolve! She sobbed again, "You shall not go—to this disaster! You don't know what you're doing! I'll stop you, Chris, I'll stop you——"

He had gathered the reins. The nervous horse was plunging and fretting. He leaned from the saddle and thrust her away, saying scornfully, "How?"

"I don't know, I don't know! But you're all I have. Perhaps God will show me how."

He did not answer. He was mastering the strong horse. Challenger, weary of waiting with that heavy hand on the rein, had plunged and wheeled, circling down the drive towards the house. It was a few moments before Chris had him in hand again; Bona, watching, saw the beast's wild eyes glint in the moonlight, saw the strain and resistance of the rippling brown sinews, the play of the powerful hoofs. A fierce free thing, untamed, unpitiful as the heart of his rider.

"Wait, Chris! Only wait a little!"

The answer came back low and angry as a lash, "Nothing in life shall make me wait!" He swung Challenger's rebellious head to the gate.

"Then perhaps this will——"

The words were clear to her; whose, she did not know. She did not know she had moved, she thought it was in spirit only that she flashed forward, barring the gateway with outspread arms. Then she knew that her flesh also had obeyed her will, the will of her unfulfilled motherhood, and was glad. "I'll pay to the uttermost to save you," she said, and smiled upwards. She saw the dark bulk of the horse, towering over her, violently jerked backwards; she saw Chris's face, suddenly old, broken, horrified. But Challenger was not again to be checked. He plunged on. The hoofs were on her, the fierce breath, the rise of the shoulder. She heard a great cry. Then she was struck; and the world was rolled up as a scroll, and the heavens were darkened.

IN that enduring darkness there dawned at last a point of light. It spread, became sound and troubled her; became pain and hurt her. With the pain was memory. She could not tell one from the other. She stirred and opened her eyes. A strange voice said, softly, "She is awake," and someone moved beside her and gave place to another. That other was Chris on his knees by the bed; and Mrs. Esterel was over near the window. The familiar folk, the familiar room, were alike strange, as if she looked at them anew after a long journey.

She looked only at Chris. With her soul in her eyes, she said, clearly, "My dear, it was ruin. I had to stop you. I could not let you go."

He took her hand in his and bent his head till his forehead rested on it. She whispered, "Has the train gone?"

After a silence the young man said, slowly, his face hidden, "That train went—four days ago."

She trembled, bewildered. His clasp on her hand grew so close it hurt. But it was good to be so hurt. She whispered, "It was the only way. Do you forgive me?" She had no answer in words. Again she whispered, "I—didn't think you'd ever forgive me."

Chris looked up. His face was wet with tears. He said, roughly, "And you risked *that* as well as your life to stop me from doing a wrong? You—would do—all that for me?"

"I would do anything for you, child! It was such a wrong to yourself, too, Chris. I had to save you—somehow. And—and I knew you wouldn't go and leave me—then——"

"Go? When the horse struck you I think my heart broke."

She had her hand free and was stroking his bowed head. "My poor boy!" she breathed. "It was cruel, but it was the only way. And Lucy?"

He said with difficulty, "They are going to—try again. He—her husband—found her

"She heard a great cry—then she was struck."

waiting for me that night. He was—very kind, she says. I—think she's glad I didn't go." The broken young voice trailed to silence, and she said again, "Poor boy!"

After a little she asked, timidly, "Shall I soon be better?"

"Very, very soon now, dear."

She could scarcely hear him. Again she whispered, "Is—is there anything——?"

"They say—you may be—a little lame——"

She laughed out, a girl's laugh. "Is that all?" she cried. "Why, what a little price to pay after all, Chris!"

Her denied life came to flower. His rough arms went round her, she heard his voice in her ear, "It was for me—for *me!* Mother, oh, *Mother*, forgive me."

ANOTHER "ARCHIE" STORY.

A ROOM AT THE HERMITAGE

by

P. G. Wodehouse

ILLUSTRATED BY
A. WALLIS MILLS

THE Hermitage (unrivalled scenery, superb cuisine, Daniel Brewster proprietor) is a picturesque summer hotel in the green heart of the mountains, built by Archie Moffam's father-in-law shortly after he assumed control of the Cosmopolis. Mr. Brewster himself seldom went there, preferring to concentrate his attention on his New York establishment; and Archie and Lucille, breakfasting in the airy dining-room one morning in August, had consequently to be content with two out of the three advertised attractions of the place. Through the window at their side quite a slab of the unrivalled scenery was visible; some of the superb cuisine was already on the table; and the fact that the eye searched in vain for Daniel Brewster, proprietor, filled Archie, at any rate, with no sense of aching loss. He bore it with equanimity and even with positive enthusiasm. In Archie's opinion, practically all a place needed to make it an earthly paradise was for Mr. Daniel Brewster to be about forty-seven miles away from it. He regarded the eternal hills with the comfortable affection of a healthy man who is breakfasting well.

"It's going to be another perfectly topping day," he observed, eyeing the shimmering landscape, from which the morning mists were swiftly shredding away like faint puffs of smoke. "Just the day you ought to have been here."

"Yes, it's too bad I've got to go. New York will be like an oven."

"Put it off."

"I can't, I'm afraid. I've a fitting."

Archie argued no further. He was a married man of old enough standing to know the importance of fittings.

"Besides," said Lucille, "I want to see father." Archie repressed an exclamation of astonishment. "I'll be back to-morrow evening. You will be perfectly happy."

"Queen of my soul, you know I can't be happy with you away. You know——"

"Yes?" murmured Lucille, appreciatively. She never tired of hearing Archie say this sort of thing.

Archie's voice had trailed off. He was looking across the room.

"By Jove!" he exclaimed. "What an awfully pretty woman!"

"Where?"

"Over there. Just coming in. I say, what wonderful eyes! I don't think I ever saw such eyes. Did you notice her eyes? Sort of flashing! Awfully pretty woman!"

Warm though the morning was, a suspicion of chill descended upon the breakfast-table. A certain coldness seemed to come into Lucille's face. She could not always share Archie's fresh young enthusiasms.

"Do you think so?"

"Wonderful figure, too!"

"Yes?"

"Well, what I mean to say, fair to medium," said Archie, recovering a certain

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amount of that intelligence which raises man above the level of the beasts of the field. "Not the sort of type I admire myself, of course."

"You know her, don't you?"

"Absolutely not and far from it," said Archie, hastily. "Never met her in my life."

"You've seen her on the stage. Her name's Vera Silverton. We saw her in——"

"Of course, yes. So we did. I say, I wonder what she's doing here? She ought to be in New York, rehearsing. I remember meeting what's-his-name — you know — chappie who writes plays and what not—George Benham—I remember meeting George Benham, and he told me she was rehearsing in a piece of his called—I forget the name, but I know it was called something or other. Well, why isn't she?"

"She probably lost her temper and broke her contract and came away. She's always doing that sort of thing. She's known for it. She must be a horrid woman."

"Yes."

"I don't want to talk about her. She used to be married to someone, and she divorced him. And then she was married to someone else, and he divorced her. And I'm certain her hair wasn't that colour two years ago, and I don't think a woman ought to make up like that, and her dress is all wrong for the country, and those pearls can't be genuine, and I hate the way she rolls her eyes about, and pink doesn't suit her a bit. I think she's an awful woman, and I wish you wouldn't keep on talking about her."

"Right-o!" said Archie, dutifully.

They finished breakfast, and Lucille went up to pack her bag. Archie strolled out on to the terrace outside the hotel, where he smoked, communed with Nature, and thought of Lucille. He always thought of Lucille when he was alone, especially when he chanced to find himself in poetic surroundings like those provided by the unrivalled scenery encircling the Hotel Hermitage. The longer he was married to her the more did the sacred institution seem to him a good egg. Mr. Brewster might regard their marriage as one of the world's most unfortunate incidents, but to Archie it was, and always had been, a bit of all right. The more he thought of it the more did he marvel that a girl like Lucille should have been content to link her lot with that of a Class C specimen like himself. His meditations were, in fact, precisely what a happily-married man's meditations ought to be.

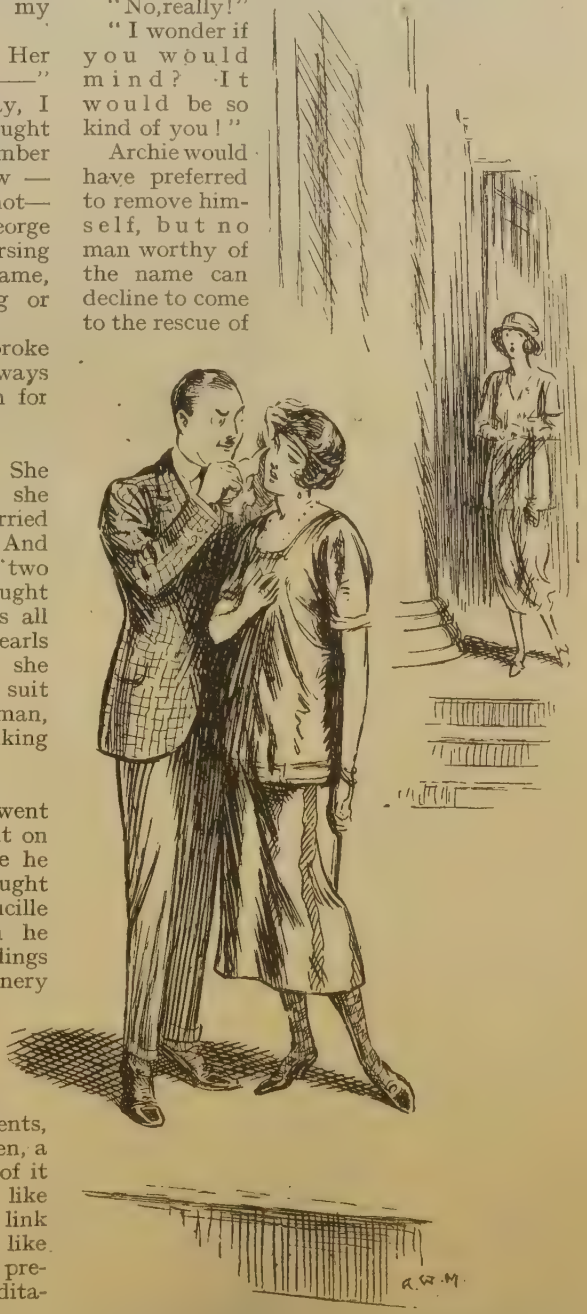
He was roused from them by a species of exclamation or cry almost at his elbow, and turned to find that the spectacular Miss Silverton was standing beside him. Her dubious hair gleamed in the sunlight, and one of the criticized eyes was screwed up. The other gazed at Archie with an expression of appeal.

"There's something in my eye," she said.

"No, really!"

"I wonder if you would mind? It would be so kind of you!"

Archie would have preferred to remove himself, but no man worthy of the name can decline to come to the rescue of



"There is a certain superficial intimacy about the attitude of a man who is taking a fly out of a woman's eye."

womanhood in distress. To twist the lady's upper lid back and peer into it and jab at it with the corner of his handkerchief was the only course open to him. His conduct may be classed as not merely blameless but definitely praiseworthy. King Arthur's knights used to do this sort of thing all the time, and look what people think of them. Lucille, therefore, coming out of the hotel just as the operation was concluded, ought not to have felt the annoyance she did. But, of course, there is a certain superficial intimacy about the attitude of a man who is taking a fly out of a woman's eye which may excusably jar upon the sensibilities of his wife. It is an attitude which suggests a sort of *rapprochement* or *camaraderie* or, as Archie would have put it, what not.

"Thanks so much!" said Miss Silverton.

"Oh, no, rather not," said Archie.

"Such a nuisance getting things in your eye."

"Absolutely!"

"I'm always doing it!"

"Rotten luck!"

"But I don't often find anyone as clever as you to help me."

Lucille felt called upon to break in on this feast of reason and flow of soul.

"Archie," she said, "if you go and get your clubs now, I shall just have time to walk round with you before my train goes."

"Oh, ah!" said Archie, perceiving her for the first time. "Oh, ah, yes, right-o, yes, yes, yes!"

On the way to the first tee it seemed to Archie that Lucille was distrait and abstracted in her manner; and it occurred to him, not for the first time in his life, what a poor support a clear conscience is in moments of crisis. Dash it all, he didn't see what else he could have done. Couldn't leave the poor female staggering about the place with squads of flies wedged in her eyeball. Nevertheless——

"Rotten thing getting a fly in your eye," he hazarded at length. "Dashed awkward, I mean."

"Or convenient."

"Eh?"

"Well, it's a very good way of dispensing with an introduction."

"Oh, I say! You don't mean you think——"

"She's a horrid woman!"

"Absolutely! Can't think what people see in her."

"Well, you seemed to enjoy fussing over her!"

"No, no! Nothing of the kind! She inspired me with absolute what-d'you-call-it—the sort of thing chappies do get inspired with, you know."

"You were beaming all over your face."

"I wasn't. I was just screwing up my face because the sun was in my eye."

"All sorts of things seem to be in people's eyes this morning!"

ARCHIE was saddened. That this sort of misunderstanding should have occurred on such a topping day and at a moment when they were to be torn asunder for about thirty-six hours made him feel—well, it gave him the pip. He had an idea that there were words which would have straightened everything out, but he was not an eloquent young man and could not find them. He felt aggrieved. Lucille, he considered, ought to have known that he was immune as regarded females with flashing eyes and experimentally-coloured hair. Why, dash it, he could have extracted flies from the eyes of Cleopatra with one hand and Helen of Troy with the other, simultaneously, without giving them a second thought. It was in depressed mood that he played a listless nine holes; nor had life brightened for him when he came back to the hotel two hours later, after seeing Lucille off in the train to New York. Never till now had they had anything remotely resembling a quarrel. Life, Archie felt, was a bit of a wash-out. He was disturbed and jumpy, and the sight of Miss Silverton, talking to somebody on a settee in the corner of the hotel lobby, sent him shooting off at right angles and brought him up with a bump against the desk behind which the room-clerk sat.

The room-clerk, always of a chatty disposition, was saying something to him, but Archie did not listen. He nodded mechanically. It was something about his room. He caught the word "satisfactory."

"Oh, rather, quite!" said Archie.

A fussy devil, the room-clerk! He knew perfectly well that Archie found his room satisfactory. These chappies gassed on like this so as to try to make you feel that the management took a personal interest in you. It was part of their job. Archie beamed absently and went in to lunch. Lucille's empty seat stared at him mournfully, increasing his sense of desolation.

He was half-way through his lunch, when the chair opposite ceased to be vacant. Archie, transferring his gaze from the scenery outside the window, perceived that his friend, George Benham, the playwright, had materialized from nowhere and was now in his midst.

"Hallo!" he said.

George Benham was a grave young man whose tortoiseshell-rimmed spectacles gave him the look of a mournful owl. He seemed to have something on his mind besides the artistically straggling mop of black hair

which swept down over his brow. He sighed wearily, and ordered fish-pie.

"I thought I saw you come through the lobby just now," he said.

"Oh, was that you on the settee, talking to Miss Silverton?"

"She was talking to *me*," said the playwright, moodily.

"What are you doing here?" asked Archie. He could have wished Mr. Benham elsewhere, for he intruded on his gloom, but, the chappie being amongst those present, it was only civil to talk to him. "I thought you were in New York, watching the rehearsals of your jolly old drama."

"The rehearsals are hung up. And it looks as though there wasn't going to be any drama. Good Lord!" cried George Benham, with honest warmth, "with opportunities opening out before one on every side—with life extending prizes to one with both hands—when you see coal-heavers making fifty dollars a week and the fellows who clean out the sewers going happy and singing about their work—why does a man deliberately choose a job like writing plays? Job was the only man that ever lived who was really qualified to write a play, and he would have found it pretty tough going if his leading woman had been anyone like Vera Silverton!"

Archie—and it was this fact, no doubt, which accounted for his possession of such a large and varied circle of friends—was always able to shelve his own troubles in order to listen to other people's hard-luck stories.

"Tell me all, laddie," he said. "Release the film! Has she walked out on you?"

"Left us flat! How did you hear about it? Oh, she told you, of course?"

Archie hastened to try to dispel the idea that he was on any such terms of intimacy with Miss Silverton.

"No, no! My wife said she thought it must be something of that nature or order when we saw her come in to breakfast. I mean to say," said Archie, reasoning closely, "woman can't come in to breakfast here and be rehearsing in New York at the same time. Why did she administer the raspberry, old friend?"

Mr. Benham helped himself to fish-pie, and spoke dully through the steam.

"Well, what happened was this. Knowing her as intimately as you do——"

"I *don't* know her!"

"Well, anyway, it was like this. As you know, she has a dog——"

"I didn't know she had a dog," protested Archie. It seemed to him that the world was in conspiracy to link him with this woman.

"Well, she has a dog. A beastly great whacking brute of a bulldog. And she brings it to rehearsal." Mr. Benham's eyes filled with tears, as in his emotion he swallowed a mouthful of fish-pie some eighty-three degrees Fahrenheit hotter than it looked. In the intermission caused by this disaster his agile mind skipped a few chapters of the story, and, when he was able to speak again, he said, "So then there was a lot of trouble. Everything broke loose!"

"Why?" Archie was puzzled. "Did the management object to her bringing the dog to rehearsal?"

"A lot of good that would have done! She does what she likes in the theatre."

"Then why was there trouble?"

"You weren't listening," said Mr. Benham, reproachfully. "I told you. This dog came snuffling up to where I was sitting—it was quite dark in the body of the theatre, you know—and I got up to say something about something that was happening on the stage, and somehow I must have given it a push with my foot."

"I see," said Archie, beginning to get the run of the plot. "You kicked her dog."

"Pushed it. Accidentally. With my foot."

"I understand. And when you brought off this kick——"

"Push," said Mr. Benham, austerely.

"This kick or push. When you administered this kick or push——"

"It was more a sort of light shove."

"Well, when you did whatever you did, the trouble started?"

Mr. Benham gave a slight shiver.

"She talked for a while, and then walked out, taking the dog with her. You see, this wasn't the first time it had happened."

"Good Lord! Do you spend your whole time doing that sort of thing?"

"It wasn't me the first time. It was the stage-manager. He didn't know whose dog it was, and it came waddling on to the stage, and he gave it a sort of pat, a kind of flick——"

"A slosh?"

"*Not* a slosh," corrected Mr. Benham, firmly. "You might call it a tap—with the prompt-script. Well, we had a lot of difficulty smoothing her over that time. Still, we managed to do it, but she said that if anything of the sort occurred again she would chuck up her part."

"She must be fond of the dog," said Archie, for the first time feeling a touch of goodwill and sympathy towards the lady.

"She's crazy about it. That's what made it so awkward when I happened—quite inadvertently—to give it this sort of accidental shove. Well, we spent the rest of the day trying to get her on the 'phone at her apartment, and finally we heard that

she had come here. So I took the next train, and tried to persuade her to come back. She wouldn't listen. And that's how matters stand."

"Pretty rotten!" said Archie, sympathetically.

"You can bet it's pretty rotten—for me. There's nobody else who can play the part. Like a chump, I wrote the thing specially for her. It means the play won't be produced at all, if she doesn't do it. So you're my last hope!"

Archie, who was lighting a cigarette, nearly swallowed it.

"*I* am?"

"I thought you might persuade her. Point out to her what a lot hangs on her coming back. Jolly her along. *You* know the sort of thing!"

"But, my dear old friend, I tell you I don't know her!"

Mr. Benham's eyes opened behind their zareba of glass.

"Well, she knows *you*. When you came through the lobby just now she said that you were the only real human being she had ever met."

"Well, as a matter of fact, I did take a fly out of her eye. But——"

"You did? Well, then, the whole thing's simple. All you have to do is to ask her how her eye is, and tell her she has the most beautiful eyes you ever saw, and coo a bit."

"But, my dear old son!" The frightful programme which his friend had mapped out stunned Archie. "I simply can't! Anything to oblige and all that sort of thing, but, when it comes to cooing, distinctly Napoo!"

"Nonsense! It isn't hard to coo."

"You don't understand, laddie. You're not a married man. I mean to say, whatever you say for or against marriage—personally I'm all for it and consider it a ripe egg—the fact remains that it practically makes a chappie a spent force as a cooer. I don't want to dish you in any way, old bean, but I must firmly and resolutely decline to coo."

Mr. Benham rose and looked at his watch.

"I'll have to be moving," he said. "I've got to get back to New York and report. I'll tell them that I haven't been able to do anything myself, but that I've left the matter in good hands. I know you will do your best."

"But, laddie!"

"Think," said Mr. Benham, solemnly, "of all that depends on it! The other actors! The small-part people thrown out of a job! Myself—but no! Perhaps you had better touch very lightly or not at all on my connection with the thing. Well, you know how to handle it. I feel I can leave it to you. Pitch it strong! Good-bye, my dear old man, and a thousand thanks. I'll do the same for you another time." He moved towards the door, leaving Archie transfixed. Half-way there he turned and came back. 'Oh, by the way," he said, 'my lunch. Have it put on your check, will you? I haven't time to stay and settle. Good-bye! Good-bye!"

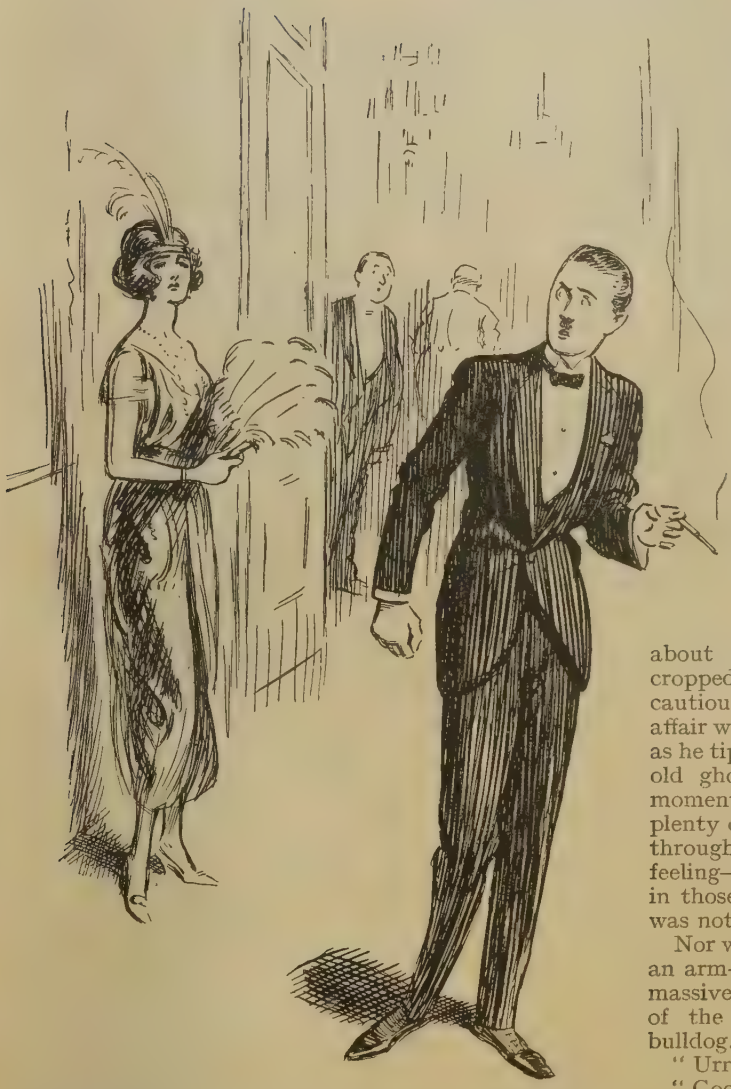
IT amazed Archie through the whole of a long afternoon to reflect how swiftly and unexpectedly the blue and brilliant sky of life can cloud over and with what abruptness a man who fancies that his feet are on solid ground can find himself immersed in Fate's gumbo. He recalled, with the bitterness with which one does recall such things, that that morning he had risen from his bed without a care in the world, his happiness unruffled even by the thought that Lucille would be leaving him for a short space. He had sung in his bath. Yes, he had chirruped like a bally linnet. And now——

Some men would have dismissed the unfortunate affairs of Mr. George Benham from their mind as having nothing to do with themselves, but Archie had never been made of this stern stuff. The fact that Mr. Benham, apart from being an agreeable companion with whom he had lunched occasionally in New York, had no claims upon him affected him little. He hated to see his fellow-man in trouble. On the other hand, what could he do? To seek Miss Silverton out and plead with her—even if he did it without cooing—would undoubtedly establish an intimacy between them which, instinct told him, might tinge her manner after Lucille's return with just that suggestion of Auld Lang Syne which makes things so awkward.

His whole being shrank from extending to Miss Silverton that inch which the female artistic temperament is so apt to turn into an ell; and when, just as he was about to go in to dinner, he met her in the lobby and she smiled brightly at him and informed him that her eye was now completely recovered, he shied away like a startled mustang of the prairie, and, abandoning his intention of worrying the *table d'hôte* in the same room with the amiable creature, tottered off to the smoking-room, where he did the best he could with sandwiches and coffee.

Having got through the time as best he could till eleven o'clock, he went up to bed.

THE room to which he and Lucille had been assigned by the management was on the second floor, pleasantly sunny by day and at night filled with cool and heartening fragrance of the pines. Hitherto Archie had always enjoyed taking a final smoke on the balcony overlooking the woods, but to-night such was his mental stress that he prepared



"When he met Miss Silverton in the lobby and she smiled brightly at him, he shied away like a startled mustang of the prairie."

to go to bed directly he had closed the door. He turned to the cupboard to get his pyjamas.

His first thought, when even after a second scrutiny no pyjamas were visible, was that this was merely another of those things which happen on days when life goes wrong. He raked the cupboard for a third time with an annoyed eye. From every hook hung various garments of Lucille's, but no pyjamas. He was breathing a soft malediction preparatory to embarking on a point-to-point hunt for his missing property, when something in the cupboard caught his eye and held him for a moment puzzled.

He could have sworn that Lucille did not possess a mauve *négligée*. Why, she had told him a dozen times that mauve was a colour which she did not like. He frowned perplexedly: and as he did so, from near the window came a soft cough.

Archie spun round and subjected the room to as close a scrutiny as that which he had bestowed upon the cupboard. Nothing was visible. The window opening on to the balcony gaped wide. The balcony was manifestly empty.

"*Urrf!*"

This time there was no possibility of error. The cough had come from the immediate neighbourhood of the window.

Archie was conscious of a pringly sensation about the roots of his closely-cropped back-hair, as he moved cautiously across the room. The affair was becoming uncanny: and, as he tip-toed towards the window, old ghost stories, read in lighter moments before cheerful fires with plenty of light in the room, flitted through his mind. He had the feeling—precisely as every chappie in those stories had had—that he was not alone.

Nor was he. In a basket behind an arm-chair, curled up, with his massive chin resting on the edge of the wicker-work, lay a fine bulldog.

"Urrf!" said the bulldog.

"Good God!" said Archie.

There was a lengthy pause, in which the bulldog looked earnestly at Archie and Archie looked earnestly at the bulldog.

Normally, Archie was a dog-lover. His hurry was never so great as to prevent him stopping, when in the street, and introducing himself to any dog he met. In a strange house, his first act was to assemble the canine population, roll it on its back or backs, and punch it in the ribs. As a boy, his earliest ambition had been to become a veterinary surgeon; and, though the years had cheated him of this career, he knew all about dogs, their points, their manners, their customs, and their treatment in sickness and in health. In short, he loved dogs, and, had they met under happier conditions, he would undoubtedly have been

on excellent terms with this one within the space of a minute. But, as things were, he abstained from fraternizing and continued to goggle dumbly.

And then his eye, wandering aside, collided with the following objects: a fluffy pink dressing-gown, hung over the back of a chair, an entirely strange suit-case, and, on the bureau, a photograph in a silver frame of a stout gentleman in evening-dress whom he had never seen before in his life.

MUCH has been written of the emotions of the wanderer who, returning to his childhood home, finds it altered out of all recognition; but poets have neglected the theme—far more poignant—of the man who goes up to his room in an hotel and finds it full of somebody else's dressing-gowns and bulldogs.

Bulldogs! Archie's heart jumped sideways and upwards with a wiggling movement, turned two somersaults, and stopped beating. The hideous truth, working its way slowly through the concrete, had at last penetrated to his brain. He was not only in somebody else's room, and a woman's at that. He was in the room belonging to Miss Vera Silverton.

He could not understand it. He would have been prepared to stake the last cent he could borrow from his father-in-law on the fact that he had made no error in the number over the door. Yet, nevertheless, such was the case, and, below par though his faculties were at the moment, he was sufficiently alert to perceive that it behoved him to withdraw.

He leaped to the door, and, as he did so, the handle began to turn.

The cloud which had settled on Archie's mind lifted abruptly. For an instant he was enabled to think about a hundred times more quickly than was his leisurely wont. Good fortune had brought him to within easy reach of the electric-light switch. He snapped it back, and was in darkness. Then, diving silently and swiftly to the floor, he wriggled under the bed. The thud of his head against what appeared to be some sort of joist or support, unless it had been placed there by the maker as a practical joke, on the chance of this kind of thing happening some day, coincided with the creak of the opening door. Then the light was switched on again, and the bulldog in the corner gave a welcoming woofle.

"And how is mamma's precious angel?"

Rightly concluding that the remark had not been addressed to himself and that no social obligation demanded that he reply, Archie pressed his cheek against the boards and said nothing. The question was not repeated, but from the other side of the room came the sound of a patted dog.

"Did he think his muzzer had fallen down dead and was never coming up?"

The beautiful picture which these words conjured up filled Archie with that yearning for the might-have-been which is always so painful. He was finding his position physically as well as mentally distressing. It was cramped under the bed, and the boards were harder than anything he had ever encountered. Also, it appeared to be the practice of the housemaids at the Hotel Hermitage to use the space below the beds as a depository for all the dust which they swept off the carpet, and much of this was insinuating itself into his nose and mouth. The two things which Archie would have liked most to do at that moment were first to kill Miss Silverton—if possible, painfully—and then to spend the remainder of his life sneezing.

After a prolonged period he heard a drawer open, and noted the fact as promising. As the old married man, he presumed that it signified the putting away of hairpins. About now the dashed woman would be looking at herself in the glass with her hair down. Then she would brush it. Then she would twiddle it up into thingummies. Say, ten minutes for this. And after that she would go to bed and turn out the light, and he would be able, after giving her a bit of time to go to sleep, to creep out and leg it. Allowing at a conservative estimate three-quarters of——

"Come out!"

Archie stiffened. For an instant a feeble hope came to him that this remark, like the others, might be addressed to the dog.

"Come out from under that bed!" said a stern voice. "And mind how you come! I've got a pistol!"

"Well, I mean to say, you know," said Archie, in a propitiatory voice, emerging from his lair like a tortoise and smiling as winningly as a man can who has just bumped his head against the leg of a bed, "I suppose all this seems fairly rummy, but——"

"For the love of Mike!" said Miss Silverton.

The point seemed to Archie well taken and the comment on the situation neatly expressed.

"What are you doing in my room?"

"Well, if it comes to that, you know—shouldn't have mentioned it if you hadn't brought the subject up in the course of general chit-chat—what are you doing in mine?"

"Yours?"

"Well, apparently there's been a bloomer of some species somewhere, but this was the room I had last night," said Archie.

"But the desk-clerk said that he had asked you if it would be quite satisfactory to you giving it up to me, and you said yes.

"'Come out from under that bed!' said a stern voice. 'And mind how you come! I've got a pistol!'"

I come here every summer, when I'm not working, and I always have this room."

"By Jove! I remember now. The chappie did say something to me about the room, but I was thinking of something else and it rather went over the top. So that's what he was talking about, was it?"

Miss Silverton was frowning. A moving-picture director, scanning her face, would have perceived that she was registering disappointment.

"Nothing breaks right for me in this darned world," she said, regretfully. "When I caught sight of your leg sticking out from under the bed, I did think that everything was all lined up for a real fine ad. at last. I could close my eyes and see the thing in the papers. On the front page, with photographs: 'Plucky Actress Captures Burglar.' Darn it!"

"Fearfully sorry, you know!"

"I just needed something like that. I've got a press-agent, and I will say for him that he eats well and sleeps well and has just enough intelligence to cash his monthly cheque without forgetting what he went into the bank for, but outside of that you can take it from me he's not one of the world's workers! He's about as much solid use to a girl with aspirations as a pain in the lower ribs. It's three weeks since he got me into print at all, and then the brightest thing he could think up was that my favourite breakfast-fruit was an apple. Well, I ask you!"

"Rotten!" said Archie.

"I did think that for once my guardian angel had gone back to work and was doing something for me. 'Stage Star and Midnight Marauder,'" murmured Miss Silverton, wistfully. "'Footlight Favourite Foils Felon.'"

"Bit thick!" agreed Archie, sympathetically. "Well, you'll probably be wanting to get to bed and all that sort of rot, so I may as well be popping, what! Cheerio!"

A sudden gleam came into Miss Silverton's compelling eyes.

"Wait!"

"Eh?"

"Wait! I've got an idea!" The wistful sadness had gone from her manner. She was bright and alert. "Sit down!"

"Sit down?"

"Sure. Sit down and take the chill off the arm-chair. I've thought of something."

Archie sat down as directed. At his elbow the bulldog eyed him gravely from the basket.

"Do they know you in this hotel?"

"Know me? Well, I've been here about a week."

"I mean, do they know who you are? Do they know you're a good citizen?"

"Well, if it comes to that, I suppose they don't. But——"

"Fine!" said Miss Silverton, appreciatively. "Then it's all right. We can carry on!"

"Carry on!"

"Why, sure! All I want is to get the thing into the papers. It doesn't matter to me if it turns out later that there was a mistake and that you weren't a burglar trying for my jewels after all. It makes just as good a story either way. I can't think why that never struck me before. Here have I been kicking because you weren't a real burglar, when it doesn't amount to a hill of beans whether you are or not. All I've got to do is to rush out and yell and rouse the hotel, and they come in and pinch you, and I give the story to the papers, and everything's fine!"

Archie leaped from his chair as though someone had punctured the seat with a bradawl.

"I say! What!"

"What's on your mind?" inquired Miss Silverton, considerately. "Don't you think it's a nifty scheme?"

"Nifty! My dear old soul! It's frightful!"

"Can't see what's wrong with it," grumbled Miss Silverton. "After I've had someone get New York on the long-distance 'phone and give the story to the papers you can explain, and they'll let you out. Surely to goodness you don't object, as a personal favour to me, to spending an hour or two in a cell? Why, probably they haven't got a prison at all out in these parts, and you'll simply be locked in a room. A child of ten could do it on his head," said Miss Silverton.

"A child of six," she emended.

"But, dash it—I mean—what I mean to say—I'm married!"

"Yes?" said Miss Silverton, with the politeness of faint interest. "I've been married myself. I wouldn't say it's altogether a bad thing, mind you, for those that like it, but a little of it goes a long way. My first husband," she proceeded, reminiscently, "was a travelling man. I gave him a two-weeks try-out, and then I told him to make a noise like a train and go on travelling. My second husband—now, *he* wasn't a gentleman in any sense of the word. I remember once——"

"You don't grasp the point. The jolly old point! You fail to grasp it. If this bally thing comes out, my wife will be most frightfully sick!"

Miss Silverton regarded him with pained surprise.

"Do you mean to say you would let a little thing like that stand in the way of my getting on the front page of all the

papers—*with* photographs? Where's your chivalry?"

"Never mind my dashed chivalry!"

"Besides, what does it matter if she does get a little sore? She'll soon get over it. You can put that right. Buy her a box of candy. Not that I'm strong for candy myself. What I always say is, it may taste good, but look what it does to your hips! I give you my honest word that, when I gave up eating candy, I lost eleven ounces the first week. My second husband—no, I'm a liar, it was my third—my third husband said—— Say, what's the big idea? Where are you going?"

"Out!" said Archie, firmly. "Bally out!"

A dangerous light flickered in Miss Silverton's eyes.

"That'll be all of that!" she said, raising the pistol. "You stay right where you are, or I'll fire!"

"Right-o!"

"I mean it!'

"My dear old soul," said Archie, "in the recent unpleasantness in France I had chappies popping off things like that at me all day and every day for close on five years, and here I am, what! I mean to say, if I've got to choose between staying here and being pinched in your room by the local constabulary and having the dashed thing get into the papers and all sorts of trouble happening, and my wife getting the wind up and—I say, if I've got to choose——"

"Suck a lozenge and start again!" said Miss Silverton.

"Well, what I mean to say is, I'd much rather take a chance of getting a bullet in the old bean than that. So loose it off and the best o' luck!"

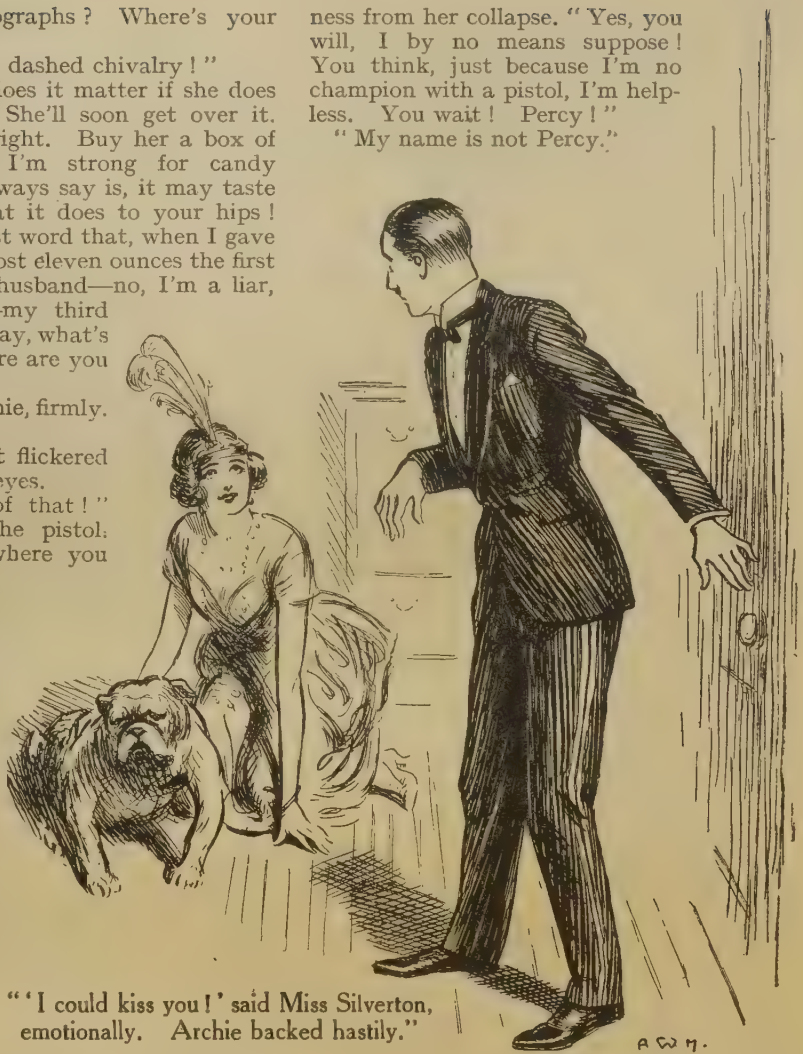
Miss Silverton lowered the pistol, sank into a chair, and burst into tears.

"I think you're the meanest man I ever met!" she sobbed. "You know perfectly well the bang would send me into a fit!"

"In that case," said Archie, relieved, "cheerio, good luck, pip-pip, toodle-oo, and good-bye-ee! I'll be shifting!"

"Yes, you will!" cried Miss Silverton, energetically, recovering with amazing swiftness from her collapse. "Yes, you will, I by no means suppose! You think, just because I'm no champion with a pistol, I'm helpless. You wait! Percy!"

"My name is not Percy."



"'I could kiss you!' said Miss Silverton, emotionally. Archie backed hastily."

"I never said it was. Percy! Percy, come to muzzer!"

There was a creaking rustle from behind the arm-chair. A heavy body flopped on the carpet. Out into the room, heaving himself along as though sleep had stiffened his joints and breathing stertorously through his tilted nose, moved the fine bulldog. Seen in the open, he looked even more formidable than he had done in his basket.

"Guard him, Percy! Good dog, guard him! Oh, heavens! What's the matter with him?"

And with these words the emotional woman, uttering a wail of anguish, flung herself on the floor beside the animal.

Percy was, indeed, in manifestly bad shape. He seemed quite unable to drag his limbs across the room. There was a curious arch in his back, and, as his mistress touched him, he cried out plaintively.

"Percy! Oh, what *is* the matter with him? His nose is burning!"

Now was the time, with both sections of the enemy's forces occupied, for Archie to have departed softly from the room. But never, since the day when at the age of eleven he had carried a large, damp, and muddy terrier with a sore foot three miles and deposited him on the best sofa in his mother's drawing-room, had he been able to ignore the spectacle of a dog in trouble.

"He does look bad, what!"

"He's dying! Oh, he's dying! Is it distemper? He's never had distemper."

Archie regarded the sufferer with the grave eye of the expert. He shook his head.

"It's not that," he said. "Dogs with distemper make a sort of snifting noise."

"But he *is* making a snifting noise!"

"No, he's making a snuffling noise. Great difference between snuffling and snifting. Not the same thing at all. I mean to say, when they snift they snift, and when they snuffle they—as it were—snuffle. That's how you can tell. If you ask *me*"—he passed his hand over the dog's back. Percy uttered another cry. "I know what's the matter with him."

"A brute of a man kicked him at rehearsal. Do you think he's injured internally?"

"It's rheumatism," said Archie. "Jolly old rheumatism. That's all that's the trouble."

"Are you sure?"

"Absolutely!"

"But what can I do?"

"Give him a good hot bath, and mind and dry him well. He'll have a good sleep then, and won't have any pain. Then, first thing to-morrow, you want to give him salicylate of soda."

"I'll never remember that."

"I'll write it down for you. You ought to give him from ten to twenty grains three times a day in an ounce of water. And rub him with any good embrocation."

"And he won't die?"

"Die! He'll live to be as old as you are! I mean to say——"

"I could kiss you!" said Miss Silverton, emotionally.

Archie backed hastily.

"No, no, absolutely not! Nothing like that required, really!"

"You're a darling!"

"Yes. I mean no. No, no, really!"

"I don't know what to say. What can I say?"

"Good night," said Archie.

"I wish there was something I could do! If you hadn't been here, I should have gone off my head!"

A great idea flashed across Archie's brain.

"Do you really want to do something?"

"Anything!"

"Then I do wish, like a dear sweet soul, you would pop straight back to New York to-morrow and go on with those rehearsals."

Miss Silverton shook her head.

"I can't do that!"

"Oh, right-o! But it isn't much to ask, what!"

"Not much to ask! I'll never forgive that man for kicking Percy!"

"Now listen, dear old soul. You've got the story all wrong. As a matter of fact, jolly old Benham told me himself that he has the greatest esteem and respect for Percy, and wouldn't have kicked him for the world. And, you know it was more a sort of push than a kick. You might almost call it a light shove. The fact is, it was beastly dark in the theatre, and he was legging it sideways for some reason or other, no doubt with the best motives, and unfortunately he happened to stub his toe on the poor old bean."

"Then why didn't he say so?"

"As far as I could make out, you didn't give him a chance."

Miss Silverton wavered.

"I always hate going back after I've walked out on a show," she said. "It seems so weak!"

"Not a bit of it! They'll give three hearty cheers and think you a topper. Besides, you've got to go to New York in any case. To take Percy to a vet., you know, what!"

"Of course. How right you always are!" Miss Silverton hesitated again. "Would you really be glad if I went back to the show?"

"I'd go singing about the hotel! Great pal of mine, Benham. A thoroughly cheery old bean, and very cut up about the whole affair. Besides, think of all the coves thrown out of work—the thingummabobs and the poor what-d'you-call-'ems!"

"Very well."

"You'll do it?"

"Yes."

"I say, you really are one of the best! Absolutely like mother made! That's fine! Well, I think I'll be saying good night."

"Good night. And thank you so much!"

"Oh, no, rather not!"

Archie moved to the door.

"Oh, by the way."

"Yes?"

"If I were you, I think I should catch the very first train you can get to New York. You see—er—you ought to take Percy to the vet. as soon as ever you can."

"You really do think of everything," said Miss Silverton.

"Yes," said Archie, meditatively.

Next Month: "First Aid for Looney Biddle."

SAVAGE SWELLS.

FINERY FOR NATIVES.

by Hayden Church

Illustrated by E.T. REED

A native "knut."
From a photo.

ONE of the queerest industries on record is on the point of reviving, after having been practically wiped out of existence by the war. As a consequence, the surprise of his life may be in store for the white man who, a few months hence, is shipwrecked on a primitive island in the South Seas, or who, attempting the Cairo-to-the-Cape or the London-to-Melbourne flight, comes down with his plane in the middle of the African jungle, or somewhere in the Malay Straits, or in the wilds of Borneo.

As likely as not, the first lot of aborigines this traveller encounters will be attired, not in the garb of Nature, nor yet in skins and feathers, but in the former costumes of the chorus men in "The Bing Boys on Broadway." The belles of the native village, more probably than not, will be found "all dressed up" in the frills and furbelows once sported by fair members of the cast of "Mr. Manhattan," or possibly in sections of jazz gowns that originally were worn on the stages of the London Hippodrome or Alhambra.

And when the "crashed" aviator or the shipwrecked mariner is lugged into the presence of King Mumbo Jumbo XIV., it's odds on that he will find that dusky monarch swaggering in garish habiliments that he last saw across the footlights of the Shaftesbury or the "Pav." Or possibly his sable Majesty will be togged out as Macbeth or Cyrano de Bergerac.

This was the surprising use that, a few years before the war came, had been discovered for the discarded tinsel and spangles of the stage. For some time previous to August, 1914, when theatrical costumes had been worn on the boards until they could be worn no more, or when a lot of them were absolutely going begging as the result of a "frost" which shrivelled up the show in which they figured, they went neither into the rag-bag nor to the "old clo'" man, but were sent instead to gladden the dusky denizens of Central Africa and the untutored aborigines of other semi-wild regions of the inhabited globe. The black man particularly loves nothing better than dressing up in the gaudiest raiment that he can get hold of, and the dusky aborigine, it proved, was tickled half to death with the attire of a musical-comedy potentate and sent into rhapsodies by the gem-studded robes that Cinderella's Prince wears in the pantomime, or a suit of second-hand stage armour. It

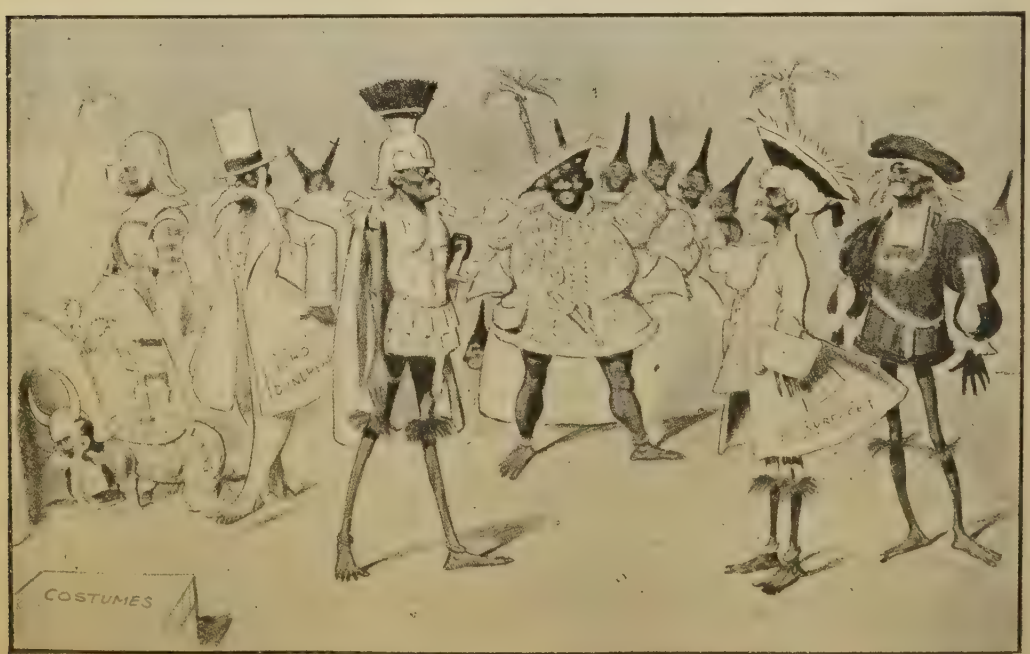
also proved that he was prepared to barter practically his earthly all for the sake of getting hold of such "duds."

THIS industry of passing theatrical cast-offs along to ingenuous natives in various parts of the world had just got going well and begun to pay fat dividends when the war brought it to a complete stop. The consequences have been unfortunate for the purveyors of the costumes, and positively tragic for poor old Chief Mhenga I., whose kraal is eight days' trek due north from Sierra Leone, and goodness knows how many other dusky chieftains, to say nothing of their followers. Drop a tear of compassion for these desolated monarchs who haven't had any new "glad rags" for over five years, and must be sick to death of the "Hello, Tango," "Pink Lady," and "Quaker Girl" costumes, which were the last they had from London and are now too shabby to wear even at a third-class cannibalistic banquet where fricasseed German is the *pièce de résistance*.

A new and gladdening era is, however, on the eve of dawning for the denizens of the African jungle, the proletariat of Papua, and the bourgeoisie of Borneo, for the business of supplying them with old "actor clothes" is getting on its feet again and soon will be in full swing. Even now a big consignment of disused theatrical costumes is being got ready for shipment to the Dark Continent. In a big London warehouse recently visited by the writer shelves and counters are piled high with the cast-off garments of queens and columbines, kings and nobles, knights and mountebanks of the stage. All these are eventually to deck the persons of monarchs of the jungle and their dusky consorts, who long ago grew weary of leading the simple life.

Previous to the war, almost the whole business of disposing of the discarded raiment of the stage to sable swells and belles was in the hands of one man, who does business in London. The story of how this unique and highly picturesque industry came into being is entertaining. It may sound almost too good to be true, but it was told to me by the erstwhile outfitter of cannibal kings and queens himself. His name is John Hyman, and apart from his former business as the Worth of West Africa and the Poiret of Polynesia, he is one of the best-known of London stage costumiers.

"It was about eight years ago that I started selling old stage costumes to African and other natives," Mr. Hyman said, rolling a long black cigar to the other side of his mouth, "and I was inspired to begin doing it by a queer and fairly exciting adventure that befell a friend of mine. He's a great traveller, and, incidentally, a very fancy dresser—a regular 'knut,' in fact. At the time I speak of he was the only passenger on



A result of the selling of old theatrical costumes to dusky kings.

Sable swells and belles.

a tramp steamer that was working its way from Beira to Chinde, if I remember rightly, on the east coast of Africa. Well, the ship was wrecked, and my friend was cast up on a cannibal island, whose inhabitants were eager to sample some real white meat. All that kept this chap from figuring as the principal dainty on the next day's menu was his extremely saucy clothing. As luck would have it, he was wearing something choice in the way of a fancy waistcoat, which went with a real Bond Street suit of mixed tweeds, and underneath he had some pink silk underwear that had cost two pounds the garment in Piccadilly.

"This raiment made a big hit with the cannibal chiefs, and it saved my friend's life, for he told the chiefs that they might have every rag he had on if they would keep him out of the casserole; and this they agreed to, it not seeming to occur to them that after he had been sent along to the *chef* his clothes would be theirs anyway. Anyhow, they spared him for the sake of his togs, and my friend, wrapped principally in a reverie, was taken in one of the catamarans that they use out there to a neighbouring island, where he got in with a consul, and eventually was put on board another ship. On the way back he did some hard thinking, and when he got home he told me that if the natives were as pleased as all that with just ordinary things like waiscoats and underwear, they would trade almost anything for really showy stuff like theatrical costumes. I saw the point quick, and that's how it started."

HYMAN smiled expansively. This tradesman's age may be guessed at sixty odd, and he has been one of London's leading costumiers for thirty years or more. To-day he can trick you out at a minute's notice as anything from an Indian rajah to an American cowboy, and when I looked in on him the other day he was in close confab with one of the most popular of British film actors, who was in quest of a pair of old-fashioned top-boots to wear in a forthcoming "movie" production which is to be enacted somewhere on the Yorkshire moors.

Within a day or two of hearing his friend's story of his adventure with the cannibals, Hyman had made arrangements for getting hold of cast-off stage clothes, particularly the disused habiliments of musical-comedy and pantomime performers, and as soon as these began to pour into his London establishment he started organizing a staff of travellers to bring their beauties to the attention of aborigines the world over. When the war began he was selling his picturesque wares in both West and East Africa, as well as in Siam, the islands off the Malay Peninsula,

and the Australian "bush," and day by day the business of arraying the untutored savage in the trappings of the footlights was being carried farther afield.

The last time I talked with the former champion pusher of Hyman's retinue of salesmen, he was just starting for Marseilles, whence he was to sail for Bombay. With him he was taking a "special line," consisting of most of the costumes used in three English pantomimes of the season of 1910-11—to wit, "Dick Whittington," "Cinderella," and "The Forty Thieves"—all left-overs from the last tour of the No. 2 "Waltz Dream" company in the provinces, and other sartorial confections that were expected to make a strong appeal to the swarthy henchmen of the Gaekwar of Baroda and the murky myrmidons of the Maharajah of Kapurthala.

Few of the natives upon whom Hyman used to work off his second-hand stage finery have any real money, of course, so the costumier let them settle in "kind," most of his African customers stumping up with rubber and palm-oil, and most of his Siamese ones in ivory. This business, when in full swing, must be a perfect gold-mine, for while these old theatrical cast-offs can be had for a song, what the purveyors of them extract from their cannibalistic and other clients in exchange is more like the price of an aria by Melba. Hyman must have made a mighty good thing out of the trade he did in the past, and ought to be completely happy at the memory of this. He isn't quite, however, being harassed by thoughts of the profits that might have been his had he only got into the field sooner, or before, as he expressed it, "the meddling missionaries spoiled the natives by half-civilizing them."

"Why, for a thing like that," he said, pointing lovingly to a gorgeous stage crown fashioned in gilt and encrusted with imitation diamonds and rubies which reposed under a glass case in his showroom, "I could have had their whole blooming country!"

Savages the world over, Hyman says, are attracted by gaudy colours, red and yellow being the favourite hues, and they all have one characteristic in common, which is a strong dislike for covering their legs. So the lovely spectacle has been presented in many a native village on the Gold Coast and elsewhere of a swarthy chieftain clad as a prince in some Shakespearean play, or as the Mikado, or maybe as the King in "The Sleeping Beauty," with a pair of naked black legs spoiling the otherwise dazzling effect of gorgeous plumage. The denizens of Northern Zululand have, according to Hyman, a regular passion for tin stage-armour, and it seems they insist on wearing it even on the hottest days. He declares, too, that the fine feathers of stage heroes and swell chorus men have a distinct psychological effect on their dusky wearers. Native soldiers fight better when dressed in gaudy uniforms, and Hyman says he has found that gold lace and brass buttons will make a henpecked Ethiopian brave enough to cheek his mother-in-law.

HE has some queer stories to tell of the parts that second-hand actor-clothes have played in the life of the jungle, and the strangest of the lot might have seemed too "steep" to be related in print, had it not been confirmed in all the essential details by an English missionary who was seen by the writer on his return, not long afterwards, from a lengthy residence in Africa.

The scene of this happening was a district in the Canicage region—Portuguese territory—which is, or was, ruled over by a chieftain who used to be one of Hyman's best customers. This dusky ruler's extensive wardrobe included, at last accounts, one complete British First Lord's uniform, as worn by Sir Joseph Porter in "Pinafore," the costume of a Spanish toreador that formerly figured in "Carmen," and the complete livery of a flunkey in a Drury Lane melodrama, besides other ornate get-ups that must have looked weird enough in an environment of mud-huts and ju-ju.

The old chief ruled in peace until a Pretender arose in the land in the person of an ambitious nephew of his. The latter began to foment a revolution, and attracted so many adherents among the "have-nots" of the Canicage region that things began to look uncommonly black for the reigning monarch. The royal crown appeared to be on the point of changing heads, when the astute old king tried bribery as a last resort. He sent for the Pretender, and without mincing matters proposed to buy him off. The inducement he offered was nothing more or less than a "Hamlet" costume, which the king had bought from one of Hyman's travelling men. Maybe it was the one that Sarah Bernhardt wore when she played the melancholy Dane in Paris, and caused a duel between two dramatic critics who disputed as to whether Hamlet was fat or lean. Anyhow, it proved too attractive a bait to be rejected by the aspirant to the throne of Canicage. After hesitating awhile—possibly soliloquizing "To be or not to be?"—after the fashion of the Prince of Denmark himself—he capitulated to the lure of the costume and agreed to call off the revolution. The old chief muttered "Saved!" and went back to the throne-room to receive an anti-Pussyfoot deputation that was due at the palace at 3.30 p.m.

Hyman says that a Congo belle became

the favourite wife of her ebony lord by dint of attiring herself in the spangles and lace that once adorned a member of the ballet at Covent Garden Opera House; and he also told of a novel spectacle that greeted the eyes of one of his "bagmen" who visited a native village on the Gold Coast for the first time. It seems that, in the meantime, the inhabitants of this village had done some bartering with those of another one nearer the coast where Hyman had already placed a fair-sized consignment of cast-offs, and the first thing the traveller saw when he

"The old chief went back to the throne-room to receive an anti-Pussyfoot deputation."

struck the second town was a local beauty who was sporting a huge "Merry Widow" hat and a sash of faded pink ribbon, but the remainder of whose costume could have been pretty successfully hidden under a postage-stamp.

The ornate "second-hands" that are thus unloaded on the heathen in his blindness do not consist entirely of theatrical costumes, however. Pretty nearly every kind of showy apparel "goes" with native tribes, and the stock-in-trade of the London syndicate that has recently been formed to embark in this picturesque trade includes types of most of the uniforms that were worn in the British Army before khaki came in, and no end of flashy liveries that once adorned the powdered footmen of Mayfair and Park Lane. Every year, by the way, the magnificent dark blue and gold-laced liveries of London's Lord Mayor's servants are renewed and the old ones sold at auction, and most of them used to be bought by Hyman, and in the fullness of time gladdened the hearts of his dusky customers.

Miss Decima Moore, the English actress who married a British Administrator in Central Africa and wrote a book about her travels there, told of a potent chief who ruled many thousands of warriors entirely by virtue of possessing the gorgeous robes of a sheriff of the City of London; and it's even betting that he got them from Hyman. The latter says that in Siam the natives will barter the last elephant tusk they have in the till for a second-hand frock-coat; while in the islands of the Indian Ocean the kind of helmet worn by an English policeman is regarded as a thing of ravishing beauty.

The GREEN DEATH

By

H. C. McNEILE ("SAPPER")

ILLUSTRATED BY

CHAS CROMBIE

SYNOPSIS OF PART I.

"I must apologize, Sir Robert," said Bill Brabazon, bursting into the billiard-room, "for what has happened. I've had the most damnable row with that fellow Denton and I've laid him out." Consternation reigned among the house-party till Major Seymour asked: "Which is the room? There's no good standing here talking ——" "Here we are," said Sir Robert, leading the way; "this is the door." The room was in darkness, and in the air there hung a rank, fetid smell. A lamp was lighted and then a man was seen lying across the window-sill. Later, when the police inspector arrived, the window-sill was empty, the body was gone.

"I left him lying, as we found him, half in and half out of the window," said Seymour. "His legs were inside, his head and shoulders from the waist upwards were outside."

Then a constable interrupted him.

"Here's the body, sir," he cried. "Outside in the flower-bed."

PART II.

THE inspector went quickly to the window and peered out; then he turned and confronted Sir Robert and Seymour.

"He's dead right enough *now*," he said, gravely. "It seems a pity that you gentlemen didn't take a little more trouble to find out if he was dead in the first place. You might have saved his life."

"Hang it, man!" exploded Seymour, angrily, "do you suppose I don't know a dead man when I see one?"

"I don't know whether you do or don't," answered the other, shortly. "But I've never yet heard of a dead man getting up and moving to an adjacent flower-bed. And you say yourself that you left him lying over the window-sill."

For a moment an angry flush mounted on the soldier's face; then, with an effort, he controlled himself. On the face of it, the inspector was perfectly justified in his remark: dead men do not move. The trouble was that Bob Seymour had felt the dead man's heart and his pulse; had turned the light of his torch from close range into his eyes. And he *knew* that he had made no mistake; he *knew* that the man was dead when he turned out the light and left the room. He *knew* it; but—dead men do not move. What had happened in the room during the time they were waiting for the police? The key had been in his pocket: who had moved the body? And why? Not Bill Brabazon: that he knew.

With a puzzled frown he crossed slowly towards the two policemen, who were hauling the limp form through the open window. And once again he paused and sniffed.

"That smell again, Sir Robert," he remarked.

"What smell?" demanded the inspector, as they laid the dead man on the floor.

"Don't you notice it? A strange, fetid, rank smell."

The inspector sniffed perfunctorily. "I smell the ordinary smell of rain on dead leaves," he remarked. "What about it?"

"Nothing, except that there are no dead leaves in June," returned Seymour, shortly.

"Well, sir," snorted the inspector, "whether there are dead leaves or not, we've got a dead man on the floor. And I take it he wasn't killed by a smell, anyway."

In the full light of the room Denton was an even more unpleasant sight than when he had lain sprawling over the window-sill. The water dripped from his sodden clothing and

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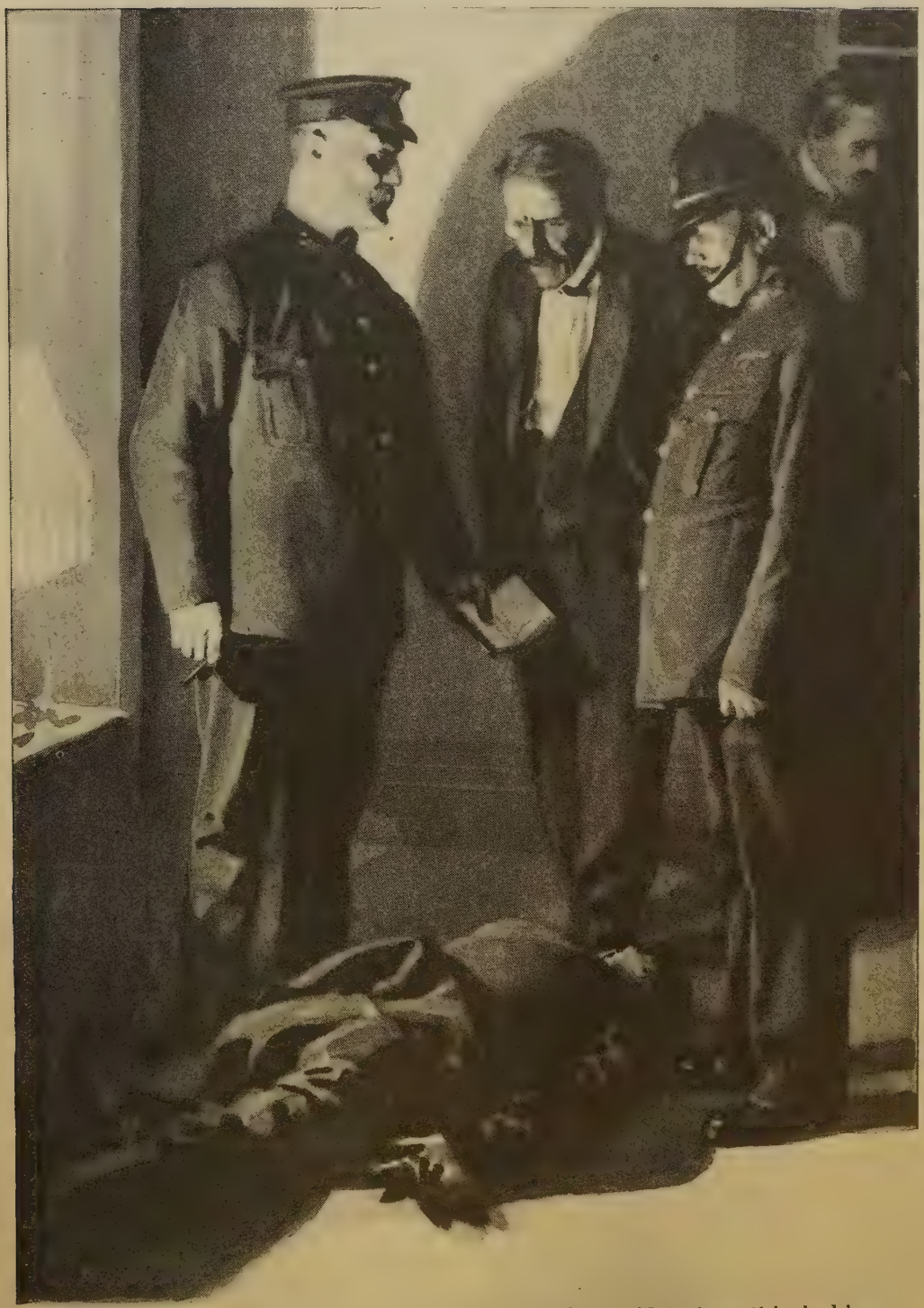


"The inspector straightened up and turned to Sir Robert. 'It looks as if he had been strangled, sir,' he remarked, professionally."

ran in little pools on the floor; the dark, puffy face was smeared with a layer of wet earth. But it was not at these details that Bob Seymour was staring: it was an angry-looking red weal round the neck just above the collar that riveted his attention. The inspector, taking no further notice of the two spectators, was proceeding methodically with his examination. First he turned out all the pockets, laying the contents neatly on the table; then, with the help of the constable, he turned the body over on its face. A little fainter, but still perfectly discernible, the red weal could be traced continuously round the neck; and after a while the inspector straightened up and turned to Sir Robert.

"It looks as if he had been strangled, sir," he remarked, professionally. "I should imagine from the size of the mark that a fairly thin rope was used. Have you any idea whether anyone had a grudge against him? The motive was obviously not robbery."

"Strangled!" cried Sir Robert, joining the other three. "But I don't understand." He turned perplexedly to Bob Seymour, who was standing near the window absorbed in thought. Then, a little haltingly, he continued: "Unfortunately there was a very severe row between him and another of my guests earlier in the evening."

"Where did the row take place?"

"Er—in this room."

"Was anyone else present?"

"No. No one heard them quarrelling. But Mr. Brabazon, the guest in question, made no secret about it—afterwards. He told us in the billiard-room that—that they had come to blows in here."

"I would like to see Mr. Brabazon, Sir Robert," said the inspector. "Perhaps you would be good enough to send for him."

"I will go and get him myself," returned the other, leaving the room.

"A very remarkable affair," murmured Seymour, as the door closed behind his host. "Don't you agree with me, Inspector?"

"In what way?" asked the officer, guardedly.

But the soldier was lighting a cigarette, and made no immediate answer. "May I ask," he remarked at length, "if you've ever tried to strangle a man with a rope? Because," he continued, when the other merely snorted indignantly, "I have. During the war—in German East Africa. And it took me a long while. You see, if you put a slip-knot round a man's neck and pull, he comes towards you. You've got to get very close to him and kneel on him, or wedge him in some way, so that he can't move, before you can do much good in the strangling line."

"Quite an amateur detective, Major Seymour," said the other, condescendingly. "If you will forgive my saying so, however, it might have been better had you concentrated on seeing whether the poor fellow was dead."

He turned as the door opened, and Bill Brabazon came in, followed by Sir Robert.

"This is Mr. Brabazon, Inspector," said the latter.

The officer eyed the youngster keenly for a moment before he spoke. Then he pointed to a chair, so placed that the light of the lamp would fall on the face of anyone sitting in it.

"Will you tell me everything you know, Mr. Brabazon? And I should advise you not to attempt to conceal anything."

"I've got nothing to conceal," answered the boy, doggedly. "I found Denton in here about half-past ten, and we started quarrelling. I'd been trying to avoid him the whole evening, but there was no getting away from him this time. After a while we began to fight, and he hit me in the face. Then I saw red, and really went for him. And I laid him out. That's all I know about it."

"And what did you do after you laid him out?"

"I went out into the garden to cool down. Then when the rain came on, I went to the billiard-room and told Sir Robert. And the first thing I knew about this," with a shudder he looked at the dead body, "was when Mr. Trayne came into the billiard-room and told us."

"Mr. Trayne! Who is he, Sir Robert?"

"Another guest stopping in the house. Do you wish to see him?"

"Please." The inspector paced thoughtfully up and down the room.

"The light was on, wasn't it, Bill, when you left the room?" said Seymour.

"It was. Why, I saw his shadow on the lawn, as I told you."

"Did you?" said the inspector, watching him narrowly. "Would you be surprised to hear, Mr. Brabazon, that this unfortunate man was strangled?"

"Strangled!" Bill Brabazon started up from his chair. "Strangled! Good God! Who by?"

"That is precisely what we want to find out," said the inspector.

"But, good heavens! man," cried the boy, excitedly, "don't you see that that exonerates me. I didn't strangle him: I only hit him on the jaw. And that shadow I saw," he swung round on Seymour, "must have been the murderer."

"You wish to see me, Inspector?" Trayne's voice from the doorway interrupted him, and he sat back in his chair again. And Seymour, watching the joyful look on Bill's

face, knew that he spoke the truth. His amazement at hearing the cause of death had been too spontaneous not to be genuine. In his own mind Bill Brabazon regarded himself as cleared: the trouble was that other people might not. The majority of murderers have died, still protesting their innocence.

"I understand that it was you, Mr. Trayne, who first discovered the body," said the inspector.

"It was. I came in and found the room in darkness. I wished to study an inscription by the window to which Sir Robert had alluded at dinner. I struck a match, and then—I saw the body lying half in half out over the sill. It gave me a dreadful shock—quite dreadful. And I at once went to the billiard-room for assistance."

"So whoever did it turned out the light," said the inspector, musingly. "What time was it, Mr. Trayne, when you made the discovery?"

"About half-past eleven, I should think."

"An hour after the quarrel. And in that hour someone entered this room either by the window or the door, and committed the deed. He, further, left either by the window or the door. How did you leave, Mr. Brabazon?"

"By the door," said the youngster. "The flower-bed outside the window is too wide to jump."

"Then if the murderer entered by the window, he will have left footmarks. If he entered by the door and left by it the presumption is that he is a member of the house. No one who was not would risk leaving by the door after committing such an act."

"Most ably reasoned," murmured Seymour, mildly.

But the inspector was far too engrossed with his theory to notice the slight sarcasm in the other's tone. With a powerful electric torch he was searching the ground outside the window for any trace of footprints. The mark in the ground where the body had lain was clearly defined; save for that, however, the flower-bed revealed nothing. It was at least fifteen feet wide; to cross it, leaving no trace, appeared a physical impossibility. And after a while the inspector turned back into the room and looked gravely at Sir Robert Deering.

"I should like to have every member of the house-party and all your servants in here, Sir Robert, one by one," he remarked.

"Then you think it was done by someone in the house, Inspector?" Sir Robert was looking worried.

"I prefer not to say anything definite at present," answered the official, guardedly. "Perhaps we can start with the house-party."

With a shrug of his shoulder, Sir Robert left the room, and the inspector turned to the constable.

"Lend a hand here, Murphy; we'll put the body behind the screen before any of the ladies come in."

"Great Scot! man," cried Seymour. "What do you want the ladies for? You don't suggest that a woman could have strangled him?"

"You will please allow me to know my own business best," said the other, coldly. "Shut and bolt the windows, Murphy."

The rain had stopped as the policeman crossed the room to carry out his orders. And it was as he stood by the open window, with his hands upraised to the sash, that he suddenly stepped back with a startled exclamation.

"Something 'it me in the face, sir," he muttered. Then he spat disgustedly. "Gaw! what a filthy taste!"

But the inspector was not interested—he was covering the dead man's face with a pocket handkerchief, and after a moment's hesitation, the constable again reached up for the sash, and pulled it down. Only the soldier had noticed the little incident, and he was staring like a man bereft of his senses at a point just above the policeman's head.

"Don't move," he ordered, harshly. "Stand still, constable."

With a startled look the policeman obeyed, and Seymour stepped over to him. And then he did a peculiar thing. He lit a match and turned to the inspector.

"Just look at this match, Inspector," he murmured. "Burning brightly, isn't it?" He moved it a little, and suddenly the flame turned to a smoky orange colour. For a moment or two it spluttered; then it went out altogether.

"You can move now, constable," he said. "I didn't want any draught for a moment." He looked at Inspector Grayson with a smile. "Interesting little experiment that—wasn't it?"

Grayson snorted. "If you're quite finished your conjuring tricks, I'll get on with the business," he remarked. "Come along over here, Murphy."

"What is it, Bob?" Bill Brabazon cried, excitedly.

"The third point, Bill," answered the other. "Great Scot! what a fool I've been. Though it's the most extraordinary case I've ever come across."

"Think you can reconstruct the crime?" sneered the inspector.

"I don't think—I know," returned the other quietly. "But not to-night. There's the rain again."

"And might I ask what clues you possess?"

"Only one more than you, and that you

can get from Sir Robert. I blush to admit it, but until a moment ago I attached no importance to it. It struck me as being merely the foolish jest of a stupid man. Now it does not strike me quite in that light. Ask him," he continued, and his voice was grim, "for the translation of that inscription under the window. And when you've got that, concentrate for a moment on the other end of the dead man—his trousers just above his ankles."

"They're covered with dirt," said the inspector, impressed, in spite of himself, by the other's tone.

"Yes—but what sort of dirt? Dry, dusty, cob-webby dirt—not the caked mud on his knees. Immense amount of importance in dirt, Inspector."

But Mr. Grayson was recovering his dignity. "Any other advice?" he sneered.

"Yes. Hire a man and practise strangling him. Then buy a really good encyclopædia and study it. You'll find a wealth of interesting information in it." He strolled towards the door. "If you want me I shall be in the billiard-room. And, by the way, with regard to what I said about strangling, don't forget that the victim cannot come towards you if his feet are off the ground."

"Perhaps you'll have the murderer for me in the billiard-room," remarked the inspector, sarcastically.

"I'm afraid not," answered the other. "The real murderer, unfortunately, is already dead. I'll look for his accomplice in the morning."

With a slight smile he closed the door and strolled into the hall. The house-party were being marshalled by Sir Robert preparatory to their inquisition; the servants stood huddled together in sheepish groups under the stern eye of the butler.

"Have you found out anything, Major Seymour?" With entreaty in her eyes, Ruth Brabazon came up to him.

"Yes, Miss Brabazon, I have," answered the man, reassuringly. "You can set your mind absolutely at rest."

"You know who did it?" she cried, breathlessly.

"I do," he answered. "But unfortunately I can't prove it to-night. And you mustn't be alarmed at the attitude taken up by the inspector. He's not in a very good temper, and I'm afraid I'm the cause."

"But what does he think?"

"I should hesitate to say what great thoughts were passing through his brain," said Seymour. "But I have a shrewd suspicion that he has already made up his mind that Bill did it."

"And who did do it, Bob?" She laid her hand beseechingly on his arm as she spoke.

"I think it's better to say nothing at the moment," he answered, gently. "There are one or two points I've got to make absolutely certain of first. Until then—won't you trust me, Ruth?"

"Trust you! Why, my dear——" She turned away as she spoke, and Bob Seymour barely heard the last two words. But he did *just* hear them. And once again the dead man was forgotten.

V.

"MAY I borrow your car, Sir Robert? I want to go to London and bring back a friend of mine—Sir Gilbert Strangways." Bob Seymour approached his host after breakfast the following morning. "I'll have to be back by three, in time for the inquest, and it's very important."

"Strangways—the explorer! Certainly, Seymour; though I'm not keen on adding to the house-party at present."

"It's essential, I'm afraid. They can only bring in one verdict this afternoon—Murder. That ass Grayson was nosing round this morning, and he, at any rate, is convinced of it."

"What—that Bill did it?" muttered the other.

"He's outside there now, making notes."

"You don't think the boy did it, do you, Seymour?"

"I *know* he didn't, Sir Robert. But to prove it is a different matter. May I order the car?"

"Yes, yes, of course. Anything you like. Why on earth did I ever ask the poor fellow down here?" Sir Robert walked agitatedly up and down the hall. "And anyway, who did do it?" He threw out his hands in despair. "He can't have done it himself."

"All in good time, Sir Robert," said the other, gravely. "The lucky thing for you is that you have practically never used that room."

"What do you mean?" muttered his host, going a little white.

"If you had, the chances are that this house-party would never have taken place," answered Seymour. "At least, not with you as the host."

"My God!" cried the other. "You don't mean to say that there's anything in that inscription!"

"It's the key to everything," returned the other, shortly. "To put it mildly, your predecessor had a peculiar sense of humour."

Ten minutes later he was getting into the car, when Inspector Grayson appeared round the corner.

"You won't forget the inquest is at three, Major Seymour?" he said, a trifle sharply.

"I sha'n't miss it," answered the soldier.

"Found the murderer yet?" asked the detective.

"Suddenly the flame turned to a smoky orange colour. For a moment or two it spluttered; then it went out altogether."

"Yes—this morning," returned the other. "Haven't you?"

And the officer was still staring thoughtfully down the drive long after the car had disappeared round a bend. This confounded soldier seemed so very positive, and Grayson, who was no fool, had been compelled to admit to himself that there were several strange features about the case. The inscription on the wall he had dismissed as childish; from inquiries made in the neighbourhood, Sir Robert Deering's predecessor had obviously been a most peculiar specimen. Not quite all there, if reports were to be believed. To return to the case, however, a complete *alibi* had been proved by every single member of the household, save one kitchen-maid, Mr. Trayne, and—Bill Brabazon. The kitchen-maid and Mr. Trayne could be dismissed—the former for obvious reasons, the latter owing to the impossibility of having done the deed in the time between leaving the drawing-room and arriving in the billiard-room with the news. And that left—Bill Brabazon. Every single line of thought led ultimately to—Bill Brabazon. Motive, opportunity, capability from a physical point of view—all pointed to him. A further exhaustive search that morning of the flower-bed outside the window had revealed no trace of any footprint; it was impossible that the murderer should have entered by the window. Therefore—he shrugged his shoulders. The house-party again—and Bill Brabazon. Blind with fury, as he admitted himself, he had first knocked the dead man down and then strangled him, turning out the light lest anyone should see. Then, taking off the rope, he had left him, almost, but not quite, dead on the floor. In a last despairing gasp for air, Denton had staggered to the window and collapsed—still not quite dead. Finally, he had made one more convulsive effort, floundered on to the flower-bed, and had there died.

Such was the scene as Inspector Grayson reconstructed it, and yet he was far from satisfied. Why strangle? An un-English method of killing a man. Still—facts were facts—the man *had* been strangled. Un-English or not, that was the manner in which he had met his death; and since suicide could be ruled out, only murder remained. If the soldier could prove it was not young Brabazon—well and good. Until he did, Mr. Grayson preferred to bank on facts which were capable of proof.

The result of the coroner's inquest was a foregone conclusion. Death after strangulation, with a rider to the effect that, had prompt assistance been given on the first discovery of the body, life might have been saved.

Bob Seymour, seated beside another lean, sun-tanned man, heard the verdict with an impassive face. He had given his evidence, confining it to the barest statement of fact; he had advanced no theory; he had not attempted to dispute Inspector Grayson's deductions. Once he had caught Ruth's eyes fixed on him beseechingly, and he had given her a reassuring smile. And she—because she trusted him—knew that all was well; knew that the net which seemed to be closing so grimly round her brother would not be fastened. But why—why didn't he tell them now how it was done? That's what she couldn't understand.

And then, when it was all over, Bob and his friend had disappeared in the car again.

"There's no doubt about it, Bob," said Strangways. "What a diabolical old blackguard the man must have been."

"I agree," answered Seymour, grimly. "One wishes one could get at him now. As it is, the most we can do is to convince our mutton-headed friend Grayson. I owe the gentleman one for that rider to the verdict."

The car stopped first at a chemist's, and the two men entered the shop. It was an unusual request they made—cylinders of oxygen are generally required only for sick rooms. But after a certain amount of argument, the chemist produced one, and they placed it in the back of the car. Their next errand was even stranger, and consisted of the purchase of a rabbit. Finally, a visit to an ironmonger produced a rose such as is used on the end of a hosepipe for watering.

Then, their purchases complete, they returned to the house, stopping at the police-station on the way. Grayson came out to see them, a tolerant smile on his face. Yes, he would be pleased to come up that evening after dinner.

"Do you want to introduce me to the murderer, Major?" he asked, maliciously.

"Something of the sort, Inspector," said Seymour. "Studied that encyclopædia yet?"

"I've been too busy on other matters—a little more important," answered the other, shortly.

"Good," cried Seymour, genially. "By the way, when you want to blow out a lamp what is the first thing you do?"

"Turn down the wick," said Grayson.

"Wise man. I wonder why the murderer didn't."

And for the second time that day, Inspector Grayson was left staring thoughtfully at a retreating motor-car.

It was not till after dinner that Bob Seymour reverted to the matter which was obsessing everyone's mind. Most of the house-party had left; only Mr. Trayne and Ruth and her brother remained. And even the Celebrated Actor had been comparatively

silent throughout the meal, while Bill had remained sunk in profound gloom. Everything at the inquest had pointed to him as the culprit; every ring at the bell and he had imagined someone arriving with a warrant for his arrest. And Bob had said nothing to clear him—not a word, in spite of his apparent confidence last night. Only Ruth still seemed certain that he would do something; but what *could* he do, exploded the boy miserably, when she tried to cheer him up. The evidence on the face of it was damning.

"About time our friend arrived, Gilbert." Bob Seymour glanced at his watch, and at that moment there came a ring at the bell.

"Who's that?" said Bill, nervously.

"The egregious Grayson, old boy," said Bob. "The experiment is about to begin."

"You mean——" cried Ruth, breathlessly.

"I mean that Sir Gilbert has kindly consented to take the place of Denton last night," said Bob, cheerfully. "He'll have one or two little props to help him, and I shall be stage-manager."

"But why have you put it off so long?" cried Bob, as the inspector came into the room.

"'When 'tis day. All serene,'" quoted Bob. "Good evening, Mr. Grayson. Now that we are all here, we might as well begin."

"Just as well," agreed the inspector, shortly. "What do we begin with?"

"First of all a visit to the smoking-room," answered Seymour. "Then, except for Sir Gilbert Strangways, we shall all go outside into the garden."

In silence they followed him to the scene of the tragedy.

"I trust you will exonerate me from any charge of being theatrical," he began, closing the door. "But in this particular case the cause of Mr. Denton's death is so extraordinary that only an actual reconstruction of what happened would convince such a pronounced sceptic as the inspector. Facts are facts, aren't they, Mr. Grayson?"

The inspector grunted non-committally.

"What's that on the floor?" he demanded.

"A cylinder of oxygen, and a rabbit in a cage," explained Seymour, pleasantly. "Now first to rearrange the room. The lamp was on this table—very possibly placed there by the dead man to get a better view of the inscription under the window. Otherwise, nothing needs moving; so that we may proceed to what happened.

"First, Inspector, Mr. Brabazon entered the room, and, as he has already described, he and Mr. Denton came to blows, with the result that he laid Denton out. Then Mr. Brabazon left the room, as I propose we shall do shortly. And, after a while, Mr. Denton came to his senses again, and went to the window for air, just as Sir Gilbert has done at the present moment."

"You can't prove it," snapped Grayson.

"True," murmured Seymour. "Just logical surmise—so far; from now onwards—irrefutable proof. The murderer is admirably trained, I assure you. Are you ready, Gilbert?"

"Quite," said Strangways, bending down and picking up the rabbit-cage, which he placed on the table by the lamp.

"Perhaps, Inspector, you would like to examine the rabbit?" remarked Seymour. "No! Well, if not, I would just ask you to notice Sir Gilbert's other preparations. A clip on his nose; the tube from the oxygen cylinder in his mouth."

"I don't understand all this, Major Seymour," cried Grayson, testily. "What's the rabbit for, and all this other tommy-rot?"

"I thought I'd explained to you that Sir Gilbert is taking the place of the murdered man last night. The tommy-rot is to prevent him sharing the same fate."

"Good God!" The inspector turned a little pale.

"Shall we adjourn to the garden?" continued Seymour, imperturbably. He led the way from the room. "I think we'll stand facing the window, so that we can see everything. Of course, I can't guarantee that the performance will be *exactly* the same; but it will be near enough, I think. Nor can I guarantee exactly when it will start." As he spoke they reached a point facing the window. The lamp was burning brightly in the room, outlining Sir Gilbert's figure as he stood facing them, and with a little shudder Ruth clutched her brother's arm.

"Even so did Denton stand last night." Seymour's even voice came out of the darkness. "You see his shadow on the grass, and the shadow of the sash; just as Mr. Brabazon saw the shadow last night, Inspector."

Silence settled on the group; even the phlegmatic inspector seemed impressed. And then suddenly, when the tension was becoming almost unbearable, Sir Gilbert's voice came from the window.

"It's coming, Bob."

They saw him adjust his nose-clip and turn on the oxygen; then he stood up as before, motionless, in the window.

"Watch carefully, Inspector," said Seymour. "Do you see those dark, thin, sinuous feelers coming down outside the window? Like strands of rope. They're curling in underneath the sash towards Sir Gilbert's head. The lamp—look at the lamp—watch the colour of the flame. Orange—where before it was yellow. Look—it's smoking; thick black smoke; and

" They saw him adjust his nose-clip and turn on the oxygen ; then he stood up as before, motionless, in the window."

the room is turning green. Do you see ? Now the lamp again. It's going out—even as it went out last night. And, by this time last night, Inspector, Denton, I think, was dead ; even as the rabbit on the table is dead now. Now watch Sir Gilbert's shirt front."

" Great heavens ! " shouted Sir Robert. " It's going up."

" Precisely," said Bob. " At the present moment he is being lifted off his legs—as Denton was last night ; and if at this period Denton was not already dead, he could not have lasted long. He would have been hanged."

" Oh, Bill, it's awful ! " cried Ruth, hysterically.

" Then came the rain," continued Seymour. " I have here the hosepipe fitted with a rose." He dragged it nearer the window, and let it play on the side of the house as far up as the water would reach. Almost at once the body of Sir Gilbert ceased rising ; it paused as if hesitating ; then, with a little thud, fell downwards half in half out of the window, head and arms sprawling in the flower-bed.

" And thus we found Mr. Denton last night, when it was still raining," said Seymour. " All right, Gilbert ? "

" All right, old boy ! " came from the other.

" But if he's all right," said the inspector, wonderingly, " why wasn't the other ? "

"Because Sir Gilbert, being in full possession of his senses when the hanging process started, used his hands to prevent strangulation. To continue—the rain ceased. We were out of the room waiting for your arrival, Mr. Grayson, and while we were out —Look! look!"

Before their eyes the top part of Sir Gilbert's body was being raised till once again he stood straight up. Then steadily he was drawn upwards till his knees came about the level of the sill, when, with a sudden lurch, the whole body swung out and then back again, while the calves of his legs drummed against the outside of the house. "Do you remember the marks on the trousers, Inspector? And then the rain came again." Seymour turned on the hose. Once more the body paused, hesitated, and then crashed downwards into the flower-bed.

"All right, Gilbert?"

"All right," answered the other. "Merely uncomfortably wet." He rose and came towards them.

"And now, Inspector," murmured Seymour, mildly, "you know exactly how Mr. Denton was killed."

"But, good Lord! gentlemen," said Grayson, feebly, "what was it that killed him?"

"A species of liana," said Sir Gilbert. "In my experience absolutely unique in strength and size—though I have heard stories from the Upper Amazon of similar cases. It's known amongst the natives as the Green Death."

"But is it an animal?" cried Grayson.

"You've asked me a question, Inspector," said Sir Gilbert, "that I find it very difficult to answer. To look at—it's a plant—a climbing plant, with long, powerful tendrils. But in habits—it's carnivorous, like the insect-eating variety in England. It's found in the tropical undergrowth, and is incidentally worshipped by some of the tribes. They give it human sacrifices, so the story goes. And now I can quite believe it."

"But, hang it, sir," exploded the inspector, "we aren't on the Upper Amazon. Do you mean to say that one of these things is here?"

"Of course. Didn't you see it? It's spread from the wall to the branches of that old oak."

"If you remember, Inspector, I pointed it out to you this morning," murmured Seymour, mildly. "But you were so engrossed with the flower-bed."

"But why did the lamp go out?" asked Ruth, breathlessly.

"For the same reason that the rabbit died," said Bob. "For the same reason that the match went out last night, and gave me the third clue. From each of the tendrils a green cloud is ejected, the principal ingredient of which is carbon dioxide—which is a gas that suffocates. The plant holds the victim, and they suffocate him. Hence the oxygen and the nose-clip; otherwise Sir Gilbert would have been killed to-night. By the way, would you like to see the rabbit, Inspector?"

"I'll take your word for it, sir," he grunted, shortly. "Only, why the devil you didn't tell me this last night I can't understand."

"For the very simple reason that you wouldn't have believed me," returned Bob. "I'd have shown you—only the rain had come on again. And you must admit I advised you to get an encyclopædia."

VI.

"BOB, I don't understand how you did it," cried Ruth.

It was after breakfast the following morning, and the sound of axes came through the open window from the men who were already at work cutting down the old oak tree.

The other laughed. "Points of detail," he said, quietly. "At first, before the police arrived, I thought it possible that Bill had been responsible for his death. I thought he'd hit him so hard that the man's heart had given out, and that in a final spasm he'd staggered to the window and died. It struck me as just conceivable that Denton had himself blown out the lamp, thinking it made it hotter. But why not turn it out? And would he have had time if he was at his last gasp? Then the police came, and the body had moved. I *knew* the man was dead when he was lying over the sill, though I hadn't seen the mark round his neck. I therefore knew that some agency had moved the body. That agency must have been the murderer—anyone else would have mentioned the fact. Therefore it couldn't have been Bill, because he was in the billiard-room the whole time, and I'd locked the door of the smoking-room. Then I saw the mark round his neck—strangled. But you can't strangle a powerful man without a desperate struggle. And why should the strangler return after the deed was committed? Also there were no footmarks on the flower-bed. Then I noticed the grey dust on his trousers just below the knee, and underneath the window outside, kept dry by the sill, which stuck out, was ivy—dusty and cobwebby as ivy always is. How had his legs touched it? If they had—and there was nowhere else the dirt could have come from—he must have been lifted off the ground. Strangulation, certainly, of a type—hung. The dirt had not been there when we first found the body lying over the sill. And if he'd been hung—who did

it? And why hang a dead man? What had happened between the time Bill left the room and the police found the body? A heavy shower of rain, during which we found the body; then clear again, while we were out of the room; then another shower, when the police found the body. And then I thought of the rhyme:—

When 'tis hot, shun this spot;
When 'tis rain, come again.

Could it be possible that there was some diabolical agent at work, who stopped, or was frustrated, by rain? It was then I saw the green cloud itself over the constable's head—the cloud which extinguished my match.

"Incredible as it seemed, I saw at once that it was the only solution which fitted everything—the marks on the back of his trousers below the knee—everything. He'd been hung, and the thing that had hanged him had blown out the lamp—or extinguished it is a more accurate way of expressing it—even as it extinguished my match. The smell—I'd been searching my memory for that smell the whole evening, and it came to me when I saw that green gas—it's some rank discharge from the plant, mixed with the carbon dioxide. And I last saw it, and smelt it, on the Upper Amazon ten years ago. My native bearers dragged me away in their terror. There was a small animal, I remember, hanging from a red tendril, quite dead. The tendril was round its neck, exuding little puffs of green vapour. So I got Gilbert to make sure. That's all."

"But what a wicked old man he must have been who planted it!" cried the girl, indignantly.

"A distorted sense of humour, as I told our host," said Bob, briefly, starting to fill his pipe.

"Bill and I can never thank you enough, Major Seymour," said the girl, slowly, after a long silence. "If it hadn't been for you——" She gave a little shudder, and stared out of the window.

"Some advantages in wandering," he answered, lightly. "One does pick up odd facts. Suppose I'll have to push off again soon."

"Why?" she demanded.

"Oh, I dunno. Can't sit in England doing nothing."

"Going alone?" she asked, softly.

"Do you think anybody would be mug enough to accompany me?" he inquired, with an attempt at a grin. Dear heavens! If only he wasn't a cripple——

"I don't know, I'm sure," she murmured. "You'd want your three points of detail to make it a certainty, wouldn't you? We only reached the coincidence stage two nights ago."

"What do you mean, Ruth?" he whispered, staring at her.

"That for a clever man—you're an utter fool. With a woman one is a certainty. However, if you'll close your eyes, I'll pander to your feeble intellect. Tight, please."

And it was as the tree fell with a rending crash outside that Ruth Brabazon found that, at any rate as far as his arms were concerned, Bob Seymour was no cripple. And Bob—well, a kiss is pretty conclusive. At least, some kisses are.

ACROSTICS.

DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 86.

Two coins; and every schoolboy knows
That two of these make one of those.

1. What most desire the solver needs,
And nothing else so well succeeds.
2. In tiny fraction of a mile
The Scot will recognize an isle.
3. Outspoken, plainly stated, clear,
If head and tail as well were here.
4. Robert was known to many men,
John comes at times within our ken.
5. From light before remove the head,
Or find a snaky fish instead.
6. Dignity, greatness, excellence—
With half of which we may dispense.
7. Five shillings, 'tis the very thing,
Possessed by mountain and by king.
8. To find the place you need, methinks,
A curious method: mix your drinks.

PAX.

Answers to Acrostic No. 86 should be addressed to the Acrostic Editor, THE STRAND MAGAZINE, Southampton Street, Strand, London, W.C.2, and must arrive not later than by the first post on September 10th.
Two answers may be sent to every light.

ANSWER TO No. 85.

1.	H	is	S
2.	O	unc	E
3.	L	esbi	A
4.	I	ri	S
5.	D	em	I
6.	A	i	D
7.	Y	ok	E

"Well" is accepted for the second light of No. 83, alluding to the town of Bonn.

DUKES

A Study in Strawberry Leaves

By

E·T·RAYMOND

WHY does a strawberry leaf stand for the highest order in the British Peerage? The strictly correct answer is that it doesn't. It is true that the coronet of a Duke bears eight golden leaves, while that of a Marquess has only four, and the lower ranks of the nobility have no share at all in the honorific Vallombrosa.

But the leaves are not strawberry leaves at all. They are merely heraldic conventions, and have nothing whatever to do with the market garden. The common man of long ago, however, fancied he saw a resemblance, and the ducal order is now inseparably associated with the fruit of which the pious old epicure declared, "God might have made a better berry, but He never did."

Whether we call a Duke a super-Marquess, or (less politely) describe a Marquess as an underdone Duke, the fact remains that there is more in common between these dignities than between any other. In the matter of golden leaves the Marquess, as we have seen, is only half a Duke; in other matters he is more generously treated. For example, the Duke has four doublings of ermine on the scarlet mantle in which he goes on State occasions to Parliament. The Marquess displays three and a half—an arrangement which, if unsymmetrical, has the advantage of making it perfectly clear that he is many pegs above the mere Baron, who can wear but two. The Duke and the Marquess, in short, have much in common, as is natural, seeing that the dignities were introduced into this country much about the same time. Still, the Duke has a lonely grandeur of his own. He is the only Peer who cannot be called informally "Lord So-and-So," and, therefore, presents a slight social difficulty to those who only occasionally penetrate to the regions in which Dukes are found. He has a further distinction of great importance. To the Sovereign (in his official capacity) the Duke is "Our Right Trusty and Our Right Entirely Beloved Cousin," and he is also styled "on certain occasions" (birthdays, perhaps, and Bank Holidays) "Most High, Potent, and Noble Prince."

ALL this leaves no possible doubt as to the importance, in one way, of being a Duke. Yet, on the whole, Dukes are not quite what they were. Even ten years have made some difference. A decade ago they were assailed by Mr. Lloyd George as feudal oppressors, and were defended by Lord Rosebery as, on the whole, a "poor but honest class." To-day nobody seems concerned either to attack or protect. When Mr. Smillie, of the Miners' Federation, tried to inflame the great heart of the people with resentment against these remnants of oligarchic privilege, the public refused to take him seriously. In 1909 it might be induced to believe in the efficient wickedness of the Dukes. To-day the bad Duke is one with the bad Baronet; it is impossible to raise a thrill with him.

The truth is that politically, and even socially—apart from the few circles where heraldic distinction is still a dominating factor—the Duke has lost importance. In the long run, wealth determines all kinds of influence that is not dependent on intellect or character. It is not long since the Dukes—or at least a good proportion of them—were as richly endowed with wealth as with dignities. Even in late Victorian times the largest commercial incomes could not overshadow the ancestral revenues of great nobles like the Dukes of Devonshire and Bedford, who united much business capacity with their magnificence. It was no simpleton who planned and nursed into splendour a town like Eastbourne, and Disraeli has left caustic comment on the keenness of the Duke of Bedford of his day, the richest subject of Queen Victoria. Every kind of

prestige was thus associated with the ducal caste. It had, as a rule, vast wealth. It has great political power. It retained in some considerable degree that intellectual distinction which derived from the great days of eighteenth-century aristocracy. It was connected with a splendour in housing and a taste in connoisseurship that the new rich had yet been unable to emulate.

One could not help feeling, when one compared the English Duke of those days with the German Prince or the Italian Marquess, a little like the honest snob satirized by the *Punch* of thirty or forty years ago, who, in contempt for a beggarly foreign nobility, exclaimed, "Give me a real nobleman like the Duke of Westminster, who could buy up the whole lot of 'em, sir, and looks on me and you as if we was so much dirt."

But what may be called static wealth, however great, can no longer compete with the vast commercial fortunes which expand with the times. South Africa, the Argentine, Mexico, Canada, the United States, the great towns of the North and Midlands, have peopled London with a new race of multi-millionaires, for the most part men of tolerable education, polished manners, and fair taste—men of a very different stamp from the typical *parvenu* of an earlier generation. It is now the magnates of finance, manufacture, and commerce, the lords of oil, meat, wool, and steel, who house the Rembrandts, the Sevres masterpieces, the Caxtons and Mazarin Bibles, the

The DUKE OF SOMERSET.

"THE PRESENT DUKE IS THE INCARNATION OF ALL KINDS OF PRIDE—PRIDE OF RACE, STATION, ANCESTRY, AND PERSON."

Photo, "Daily Sketch."

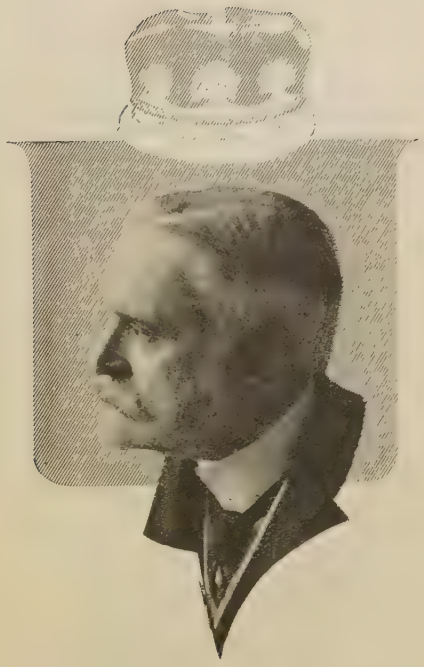
The DUKE OF NORTHUMBERLAND,

"THE YOUNGEST OF OUR POLITICAL DUKES, IS ALSO THE MOST PROMISING."

Photo, Russell.

Italian Primitives, and the French Impressionists. It is they who run the great racing stables, provide the great social displays, pervade the illustrated papers, and even pull many of the most important political wires.

Even twenty years ago it would have been possible to point to half-a-dozen Dukes exercising in one way or another great influence on the affairs of their day; no Cabinet was complete without one; in society it was theirs to bind or loose; they dominated the Turf; they were sought for by directors and review editors; and at party meetings their lightest word was listened to with strained attention. To-day nearly all the Dukes are political "backwoodsmen"; hardly one is a dominant social figure, and the Ministerial Elysian fields are destitute of the smallest trace of strawberry leaves. There was probably never a richer House of Lords or House of Commons than that of to-day. There never was a less aristocratic Cabinet, and Mr. Winston Churchill, as the grandson of a Duke, is the nearest approach to that august order in the Government of Mr. Lloyd George.



The DUKE OF RUTLAND

"IS A DEVOTED FRIEND OF WILD BIRDS, A GREAT ANGLER, AND AN EDITOR OF BOOKS ON COUNTRY LIFE."

Photo. Elliott & Fry.

IN such circumstances it is only natural that the Dukes who can still be classed as political should be affected with some degree of bias against the new order. Thus the Duke of Marlborough quite recently expressed the opinion that the leadership of the Conservative Party was "in the gutter." The Duke of Somerset angrily protests from time to time against the influence of Mr. Lloyd George. The Duke of Northumberland thinks nothing will ever be right until Conservatism becomes again quite Conservative.

The future is with the young, and the Duke of Northumberland, the youngest of our political Dukes, is also the most promising. He reached his rank by the unhappy accident of the death of his talented brother, that Earl Percy who was some years ago regarded as one of the rising figures on the Unionist benches of the House of Commons. He got as far as the Under-Secretaryship for Foreign Affairs, and would have gone further had he not tended to make politics only one of his hobbies; another was travelling in the most arid and heated parts of the world. The Nile at any time of the year is hot enough for most people; the Nile in August is an inferno. But Earl Percy was never happier than when grilling on the deck of an Egyptian river-boat in the height of summer, and it is even said that he invented shelters of corrugated iron in order that he might keep himself comfortably warm.

The present Duke is less casual, and of a graver character. His determination as well as his physical form is attested by the fact that he once walked in the snow from Montreal to Quebec (one hundred and eleven miles) for a wager. He takes life very seriously, and both in Society, where he has a reputation for shyness, and in the House of Lords, where his "reactionary" speeches make him the idol of the "stern and unbending Tories," he is a solemn figure. With the possible exception of Mr. Harold Cox, the Duke is the most perfect survival of the Victorian individualist. He holds in the extremest form the doctrine that a man should do what he likes with his own, and was perfectly unabashed when Mr. Smillie, during the Coal Commission, quoted the Pentateuch, the New Testament, and a barrow-load of Blue Books in impeachment of that attitude.

The Percys—or rather the Smithson Percys, for little of the blood of Hotspur circulates in the ducal blood of to-day—have mostly been what country people call "a little near." The present Duke's father used to sell even the sea-water from

The DUKE OF BEDFORD

"WAS ALMOST THE FIRST OF THE GREAT PEER LANDOWNERS TO SET THE FASHION OF 'GETTING OUT OF LAND.'"

Photo. Elliott & Fry.

his foreshore, and Horace Walpole records that the Duke of his day was noted for all sorts of stratagems "to raise his rents a little." But though tenacious of the rights of property, the present Duke has a high conception of its duties. He recalls in a good many ways the earnest young aristocrats who pervaded the novels of Disraeli and talked "Young Englandism." In some circles he is looked on as the certain leader of Conservatism, whose time will come when the Coalition's has gone. In some respects his qualifications cannot be denied. He is sure of himself and of his opinions; perfectly honest and fearless; a good, if somewhat formal, speaker and writer (he was one of the official eye-witnesses during the war); and a man with some power of inspiring confidence and loyalty. Thus the day may quite possibly come when his long, serious, slightly equine face (a little recalling that of the conventional chess-board knight) will be as well known as that of Mr. Lloyd George.

NO such high destiny can be anticipated for the Duke of Somerset, who is of the same type, but conceived in a spirit of comedy. Some politicians may take too seriously the head of the House of Percy; nobody takes at all seriously the head of the House of St. Maur, or, as it used to be written, Seymour. Algernon, fifteenth Duke of the

The DUKE OF DEVONSHIRE

"KNOWS WHAT HE WANTS AND NEVER SAYS ANYTHING HE IS NOT SURE ABOUT."

Photo. Downey.

The DUKE OF WESTMINSTER,

"THE FIRST DUKE TO WIN THE D.S.O."

Photo. Topical Press.

line founded by the Protector Somerset, is a fine figure of a man, of Herculean build, enormous strength, handsome presence, and hasty temper. He is one of our poorer Dukes, and stories are told of his being bookless and pictureless when he succeeded to the title. All poverty, however, is relative, and it would be a mistake to conceive the Duke as boiling his own kettle or blacking his own boots, whether at Maiden Bradley or in Grosvenor Square. The elderly Duke who is compelled to take in paying guests, the youthful Duke who simply must marry an American in order literally to live—these are, after all, commoner figures in fiction than in life.

The only trouble with the Duke of Somerset is that the possessions of the family are just a little inadequate to his pride. The haughtiness of the Seymours has long ago passed into a proverb. One of the family, in the eighteenth century, was known as "the proud Duke." Another, representing the elder but non-ducal branch of the race, was greeted by William III. with the remark, "I believe, Sir Edward, you belong to His Grace of Somerset's family." "Your Highness

is wrongly informed," was the reply. "The Duke of Somerset belongs to my family." The present Duke is the incarnation of all kinds of pride—pride of race, station, ancestry, and person.

One of his greatest and most legitimate sources of pride is his charming Duchess, who shares all his views and many of his amusements. The pair hunted big game in Canada together, they appear side by side on Primrose League platforms, and often their signatures occur in the same issue of the *Times* under letters expressed with the same energy of denunciation. Together they have denounced most things in the way of modern legislation, and the Duchess, at the time of the Insurance Act, played with the idea of a "Won't-Stick-Stamps League."

Until 1914, Mr. Lloyd George oppressed the ducal imagination as a kind of financial Attila, or Hammer of God. Then the war came as a reconciler, but with the rigours of peace the tender plant of confidence has been nipped in the bud, and the Prime Minister again represents "encroachments," "spoliation," "confiscatory legislation," and a general tendency to Bolshevism and dishevelled morals. Such depth of conviction would doubtless lead far if the Duke were a skilful politician, but he has no notion of tactics, and, though a considerable character, cannot be called a serious force even in the wilder gardens of Conservatism.

ANOTHER physically gigantic Duke is His Grace of Rutland, who stands six feet three inches in his boots, and, with his monocle and short white beard, is one of the most picturesque figures of the Peerage. In his House of Commons days he was Lord Salisbury's Private Secretary, and his handsomely swarthy face and exquisitely tailored figure made him the very ideal of the aristocratic hero of a Bow Bells novelette. Being a Manners, it is unnecessary to add that he is a Conservative. Was it not a Lord John Manners who produced the immortal lines :

> Let laws and learning, arts and commerce die,
> But leave us still our old nobility ?

The Duke of Rutland, however, is not a partisan in quite the same sense as his cousins of Northumberland and Somerset. His chief political interests are agriculture and Army affairs ; he is intensely concerned in keeping men on the soil and getting them into the Territorials. On the whole, while steadily speaking and voting Conservative, he adopts the persuasive rather than the denunciatory tone. On one occasion at a war meeting he magnificently approved of Mr. Ben Tillett. Like other Dukes, he has recently sold much of his land. "Grievous necessity," the effect of "crushing taxation," has "forced him to part with many acres very dear to him." The Duke is a devoted friend of wild birds, a great angler, and an editor of books on country life. Not the least of his distinctions is that of being the father of the famous beauty till lately known as Lady Diana Manners.

THE Duke of Bedford also takes a great interest in birds and beasts. Apart from "preserving" extensively, he keeps in his ancestral park yaks, buffaloes, llamas, and other out-of-the-way animals. The Duke's other great concerns are land and the Army. The once vast Bedford estates are now, however, sadly diminished. In London the great block of Covent Garden has been sold ; in the country the Duke has divested himself of many thousands of acres in Devonshire, Bedfordshire, and Cambridgeshire. The Duke, indeed, was almost the first of the great Peer landowners to set the fashion, so generally followed, of "getting out of land"; he foresaw that the day of the great estate was over.

The Russells have always been a shrewd and careful race. When William III. offered a dukedom to the Earl of his day it was at first

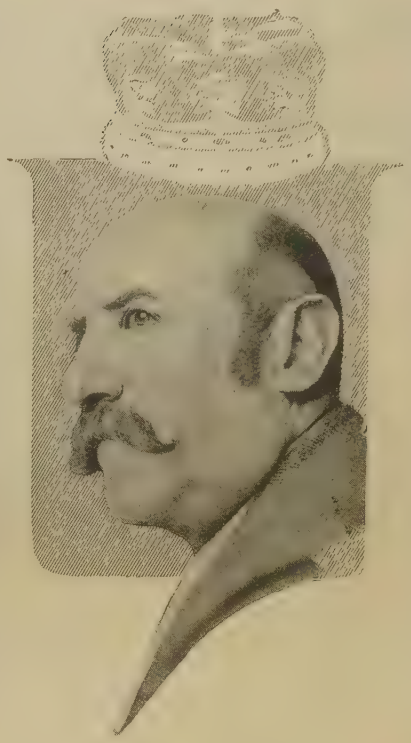
The DUKE OF MARLBOROUGH.

"HIS CHIEF ENTHUSIASM IS THE LAND QUESTION."

Photo. Elliott & Fry

declined. "For," the Earl argued, "if I become a Duke, all my sons will be Lords. And what can you do with a Lord? As an Earl I can put my younger sons in a profession, in stock-jobbing, or even in trade. But there is something ridiculous, and almost indecent, in the spectacle of a Lord getting his living." So the King, being determined that so great a family should be bound irrevocably to his cause, had literally to force on the Russells an honour which generally falls only to genius or intrigue.

Thanks to this abidingly businesslike disposition, Woburn has always been a model estate. It is said that you will be eyed askance if you throw a spent match on the ground. Mr. Lloyd George began his land campaign in this neighbourhood, and came into speedy collision with the Duke. "I spend the money I make from my London property," said the latter, "in making my country tenants comfortable, but when I am abused as a grasping country landlord I don't feel much disposed to continue with the amusement."



The DUKE OF BEAUFORT

"IS NEVER HEARD IN THE HOUSE OF LORDS, BUT IN THE HUNTING-FIELD DISPLAYS AN ELOQUENCE QUITE HIS OWN."

Photo. Sport & General.

The Bedford Estate office has had the unique distinction of providing the country with a Minister and the Peerage with a Baron. During the Budget fight Mr. Lloyd George had many a sparring match with the Duke's agent, Mr. Rowland Prothero, a distinguished scholar and literary man, and a politician of some note. Years later, when looking for someone to fill the Board of Agriculture, he exclaimed: "What about the man I called the Duke of Bedford's butler, or something of that sort? That's the man I want." Thus it came about that Lord Ernle was put in the position of serving ploughing-up notices on his own employer. Lord Ernle may have seen the humour of it, the Duke did not; the Russells have never been noted for a sense of fun.

As an old officer the Duke was one of the most pertinacious critics of Lord Haldane, and one of the most consistent prophets of war with Germany; and at one time he was thought a "possible" for the War Office. With much solid ability, however, he possesses little of the talent for politics, which has only occasionally broken out in his family, and his careful speeches and letters are rather soporific in tendency.

THE sale of Devonshire House in Piccadilly, the destruction of the great Chatsworth conservatory, the disposal of famous Caxtons to an American collector—these are signs that even the great House of Cavendish cannot defy altogether the influences at war with the wealth that does not reproduce itself quickly. The Cavendishes are a distinctively Whig House. They sprang from obscurity about the time of the Reformation; they reached ducal rank at the Revolution, and they waxed greater and greater as the Whig ascendancy consolidated. Even in becoming Conservatives, the Cavendishes have hardly ceased to be Whigs. "Cavendo tutus," the punning family motto, may be roughly translated as "Go slow, and you will be safe"; and the Cavendishes are very English in their unadventurous common sense. As Johnson remarked of the Duke of Devonshire of his day, they are "dependable" men. Lacking all the showy qualities, destitute of imagination, brilliance, vision, and eloquence, they are yet quite liable to get hold of the right end of any political stick. The present Duke follows the tradition of safety first. He is a "safe" Governor-General of Canada, just as he was a "safe" Civil Lord of the Admiralty, simply because he knows what he wants and never says anything he is not sure about. The last Duke was given to yawning in public, and once confessed that at an important Cabinet meeting he was "a little inattentive," by which he meant, in plain English, fast asleep. If the present Duke does not yawn he often looks as if he wanted to. His attitude to life, and especially public life, is that of one profoundly bored. But he can act with decision on occasion; the destruction of the Chatsworth conservatory is a case in point. Condemned in the in-

terests of coal economy, it would have taken years to pull down this private Crystal Palace. The Duke, therefore, had it blown up.

OF a much more mercurial character is the Duke of Westminster, the first Duke to win the D.S.O.; it was earned by a very dashing affair with armoured cars in the Egyptian desert. Much of the feverishness of modernity is concentrated in the present head of the House of Grosvenor. He skips from town to country, from England to the Continent, from one occupation to another, with a vivacity that leaves the Society papers breathless. He is an all-round sportsman, good equally at fox-hunting, deer-stalking, rabbit-shooting, and fishing. He has travelled in many parts of the world, both as tourist and soldier, and one of his solaces is patronage of the lighter stage. At one time he seemed possessed of serious ambitions in politics. That was in the days of the "Confederates" and "Die Hards," and the Duke was understood to be ready to invite to dinner anybody who, in return for that honour, contributed a thousand pounds to the party war-chest. But the war came to put an end to such enthusiasms, and peace has not revived them. Hugh Richard Arthur Grosvenor, second Duke and eleventh Baronet, is a well-grown man, and has no appearance of being crushed with his dignities. Indeed, he gives a chance observer the impression that he really does not care much about being a grandee, or having such an enormous amount of house-room as was his at Grosvenor House and Eaton Hall. He prefers life to stately living.

THE Duke of Marlborough distinguished himself during the war, first by acting as King's Messenger between Whitehall and G.H.Q., and secondly by ploughing up part of Blenheim Park and growing cabbages in the ornamental gardens. His practice thus squared with his precept as an official of the Board of Agriculture. Like other Dukes he has sold much of his land; alone among Dukes, he saved the auctioneer's fees by appearing himself in the rostrum. His tenants like him, and there are plenty of them to do so, since he has over one thousand allotment keepers and smallholders. His chief enthusiasm is the land question, and it was perhaps the resentment of an unappreciated enthusiast which made him warn Mr. Lloyd George a few years ago that he would never again be invited to Blenheim. The Duke is rather given to impressive declarations of this sort, and only a few months ago drew a horrifying picture of England without an aristocracy "to dispense hospitality to all classes." None of the Churchills are deficient in brains, and the Duke often gives an impression that he is really coming out, and then goes in again. Perhaps he is overshadowed by the memory of his warlike and famous ancestor and by the present fact of his still more famous cousin.

WHEN we compare this list with any which could have been compiled twenty, thirty, or forty years ago, we shall be conscious of what was above suggested — a certain decline in ducal stocks. But in their own territories it is a different story; the Dukes (to say nothing of the Marquesses, Earls, Viscounts, and older Barons) retain their prestige in the Shires. If one wants a glimpse of the old thing he should make a trip to the Beaufort country. The present Duke of Beaufort might easily walk down Piccadilly without being recognized, but anywhere within twenty miles of Badminton rustic hands go up to rustic caps to hail his stalwart figure. The Fitzroy Somersets are of the blood royal of England. They descend directly, without a gap or a blot on their pedigree, from John of Gaunt, and they long held in the West of England a state almost regal. They have produced one or two soldiers and one considerable thinker—that Marquess of Worcester who invented the first steam-engine in the reign of Charles II. But the main industry of the family is sport.

The memory is still cherished of the days when the last Duke, surrounded by a family of gigantic sons, did the honours of Badminton with a princely disregard of expense. He was a man of all worlds, and many capitals; his successor is more the truly rural grandee. The present Duke and his Duchess care little about London Society. The Duke's chief trouble is to keep down his weight and to keep up his pack—the pack which has been his life's care. He is never heard in the House of Lords, but in the hunting-field displays an eloquence quite his own, though his language is perhaps less picturesque than that of an old peer-neighbour of his who once swore at a great newspaper proprietor as a "damned printer," and told a Jewish lord of finance that "if everybody had his rights he would be 'untin' jackals round Jerusalem on a donkey." Even the sporting glory of the Fitzroy Somersets is not quite what it was, in these days of heavy taxation and dear hay. But the Duke of Beaufort lives up to his motto, "I scorn to change or to fear," and things at Badminton go (so far as is possible) as they did in the days when graduated death duties were not.

THE HOST at № 10

By GARRET SMITH

Illustrated by E·G·OAKDALE

ABRUPTLY the debonnair gentleman in dinner-coat stopped. His whole demeanour underwent strange, swift change. An arc light, filtering through the heavy foliage that lined the quaint old street, had revealed a lithe, well-tailored figure sauntering gracefully along, apparently oblivious to all save the silent midnight charm of this embowered city byway.

Then suddenly he had petrified. The malacca stick that had been beating out the measures of the latest melody softly whistled through a set of perfect teeth, stopped in mid-air, half-way through a measure. Instantly it suggested a weapon of defence. The melody ceased sharply. The perfect teeth set off a silent snarl.

It was as though a beribboned Persian kitten playing with a ball of yarn had been suddenly transformed into a slavering panther crouched for a murderous spring upon its prey.

Beside him rose the high entrance of an old house with marble doorsteps. As the aristocratic senator had built it three generations before with loving care, it stood to-day, save that moss and ivy all but hid its ancient bricks and that countless feet long since dead had worn concave its yellowed marbles.

But the tense figure in dinner-coat was peering at no ghost of a dead statesman. From the depths of the dark areaway his keen ear had caught a muffled rasp of rending metal.

Without move or breath he listened in vain for a repetition of the sound. The listless breeze, that for a moment had sought to lift the dead weight of midsummer heat, sighed its despair in the foliage above him and abandoned the effort. A cricket chirped a brief note of encouragement, but instantly realized its futility. From afar came momentarily the incongruous clang of a tramcar. Then silence, complete and absolute.

But the shadow against the basement wall seemed etched more sharply than the dim street light warranted. Even as the watcher's quick mind grasped this detail, the silhouette melted through the brickwork. Only the vague blur of a window remained.

At that the gentleman released his pent-up breath in a soft, thoughtful whistle. A sardonic smile replaced the snarl. Reflectively he stroked a smooth-shaven lip.

Then his momentary alertness vanished. Again he was the jaunty, sauntering homecomer from late evening festivities. Twirling his stick gaily as he moved on, he laughed; a mellow ripple that echoed far down the silent street.

"You're seeing things, old Top! Better quit drinking for a bit! Wife at the seaside! Midsummer madness! All that sort of thing," he chuckled.

Now his steps wavered a little, indicative of confidential relations with viands contraband in that city.

"—was the smile that she had for me," he sang in a slightly maudlin tenor, resuming the melody where he had dropped it when distracted.

Three doors away, where an aged maple blanketed a house-front in almost complete blackness, he paused and did a curious thing. At first thought it seemed further capriciousness on the part of one entertainingly befuddled.

Six times he slapped boot-sole smartly on flagging. Next, from his pocket, he snatched a bunch of keys and jingled them. Finally, after a pause of an instant, again he stamped once on the pavement, this time a little more heavily.

Now became apparent the method in this seeming madness. It was a creditable bit

of off-stage business, a passable acoustic imitation of a man mounting the steps of his home, unlocking the front door, entering, and slamming it after him. It might easily deceive anyone listening from a little distance.

But the manipulator had not moved from his tracks. All this time he had kept his eye on the marble steps of No. 10, where, without doubt, the shadow of a man had vanished through the area window.

Slowly, soundlessly, he deployed back towards the marble steps, picking a course through the darkest shadows. The Persian kitten was again the panther stalking his prey. Presently he sidled into the dim area.

It was as he had thought. The iron bars that had guarded the window had been wrenched loose at the bottom. Through them he carefully thrust his head and listened. At first there was nothing save the monotonous drip of a loose water-tap somewhere in the rear. Then his ear caught the thud of apparently unconcerned footsteps leisurely mounting a stairway above. If the intruder had seen the passer at all, the latter's by-play in front of the near-by house had probably reassured him, or his watcher if he had one.

For a moment the man in dinner-coat stood irresolute, puzzled annoyance clouding his lean, dark face. Once he turned towards the breached window as if to follow the man he could hear making himself at home within. Then he hesitated and turned back. Again he stroked his upper lip thoughtfully. "By Jove!" he exclaimed at last, "I'll do something original. I'll call in the police. Midsummer madness! What?"

The broken bars he carefully arranged so that he could tell on his return if the intruder had escaped in his absence. A moment more he listened to the leisurely footsteps, then, chuckling silently, he turned back down the street.

It was one of many similar and beautiful old byways, with mellow ranks of comfortable houses, entrenched behind double files of shade-trees. Just now these secluded, lightly-policed avenues were a burglars' paradise.

With the coming of the dog days families had fled to cool shores. The dollar-earners were left to steam in stifling homes with one or two servants to mitigate their miseries. Hence dwellings were not as a rule shut up and put under burglar-alarm protection. Silver was not stored. The winter jewellery supply often remained in wall-safes.

Such homes were marked by certain gentry willing to relieve of the burden of some of his wealth anyone able to work and, to the minds of these gentry, fool enough to do it.

Such a home was No. 10.

THE amateur sleuth kept its front in sight over his shoulder as he hurried towards the corner. There, a moment later, he accosted Officer Blaney.

"Burglar in No. 10! One man job, I think. Time for you to get help and surround the place, but hurry. I'll run back and keep a lookout. You'll find me in the area. It's all right. I've got a revolver."

"Confound it!" grumbled Blaney. "That's the third on my beat this week. I gotta get him this time!"

His ordinarily florid face still flushed the brighter for the verbal lashing his chief had indulged in when he reported for duty that evening.

Spurred by these painful recollections, the harassed officer dashed for the police 'phone. The citizen hurried back to No. 10, where a few minutes later he was rejoined by the patrolman and two reserves. These latter were stationed, one a few doors each side of No. 10, to cut off an escape from the front. Two others had already been sent into the street in the rear to prevent a break in that direction.

"He hasn't come back through the front, unless he's uncommonly clever," whispered he of the dinner-coat. "I fixed the bars so that I could tell if they'd been disturbed, and they haven't been."

The patrolman, after a brief inspection, slipped silently through the broken bars. A moment later the other followed.

"Go back!" commanded the officer, with as much authority as could be put into a barely audible whisper.

"Nothing doing!" breathed the citizen, even more firmly into the ear of the law. "I'm going to see the fun. It's jolly old midsummer madness perhaps, but I don't get such a chance often."

Again the irrepressible chuckle.

It was no time nor place for argument. Force was equally out of the question with the chance of being peppered with a revolver out of the darkness at the slightest disturbance. So the officer yielded.

Down a black, close passage they tiptoed. The sense of walking blindfold into a trap was even more suffocating than the air of the little-used basement. But, either through bravado or desire for protection, the citizen carried on staunchly at the officer's heels. Up a narrow flight of steps they felt their way to the first floor, then halted in surprise.

The broad stairway leading to the second floor was half lighted by a narrow gleam from the partly-open door of a room off the upper landing. In that apartment someone was leisurely moving about and humming in a pleasant baritone.

Dinner-Coat halted and tugged nervously at his lip. In his surprise the officer stepped

"A man in shirt-sleeves, calmly undoing his necktie, stepped out to the head of the stairs. 'What the deuce does this mean?' he exclaimed."

back and into noisy collision with a heavy chair, ghostly in its summer cerements. The disturbed furniture snarled harsh protest. The melody ceased. The door above swung open. A man in shirt-sleeves, calmly undoing his necktie, stepped out to the head of the stairs.

He was a person of middle size and age, light of complexion and prosperous of bearing. The eyes that searched the dim stairway were keen and calm.

"Is that you, Walter?" he demanded, sharply. "What do you mean by staying out like this? Haven't I told you——"

But at that instant he had pressed a switch and the hall lamp flashed on, revealing to his startled eye a puzzled policeman and an amused citizen in dinner-coat.

"What in—what the deuce does this mean?" exclaimed the man at the stairhead when he had his voice in hand.

The gentleman in dinner-coat raised warning palm and dashed lightly up the stairs, followed somewhat doubtfully by the less agile officer. Without waiting for the latter to collect his wits, the citizen acted as spokesman.

"Did you by any chance just come in through your basement window? Lost key and all that sort of thing?"

"No. What's the joke? Been in two hours!"

"Then there's a burglar in the house! Saw him breaking in—area window—called police. Got the house surrounded. Must have hidden when he found you here."

"Good Lord!" husked the semi-disrobed one, diving for the bedroom. "Let me get my revolver."

He returned in a moment with a heavy automatic.

"So that's why my valet is out so late," he whispered. "Fellow must have waylaid him outside. I have been reading in the library ever since I got home. Must have started for bed just about the time he broke in. Lord! He may be hiding somewhere, ready to pepper us!"

BY now Officer Blaney had readjusted his mind to the situation and was all cool efficiency. He had come prepared for a still hunt for an unconscious quarry, and found himself faced with the problem of running down a trapped but thoroughly warned and desperate man, presumably ambushed somewhere in the dark house and ready to shoot without hesitation, knowing it to be his only chance of escape. The advantage had shifted entirely to the side of the intruder.

Most normally brave men must admit an atavistic fear of darkness and the unknown, reminiscent of sabre-toothed tigers and winged reptiles that haunted the dreams of our cave-dwelling ancestors in the primeval jungle. Many a veteran from the trenches feels his scalp creep when he follows a lonely country road or a dark alley at midnight. Blaney, who had before now leaped single-handed into the midst of a gang fight, his Irish heart beating a pæan of joy, trembled as he peered down the dark hall, whose terror was unseen, but no mere creature of the imagination.

He snapped off the light as a first precaution.

"Gad! We'd 'a' made sweet targets for that guy if he'd wanted to pot us from downstairs. You gentlemen stay right here. If everybody goes prowlin' around, we'll be shootin' each other. I'll begin at the top an' work down. He may try to beat it, an' we'll let him. The boys outside'll get him. It's ticklish business pokin' around in a dark house when you got a guy with a gun cornered somewhere in the place."

The officer, courage and revolver firmly in hand, tiptoed to the top floor. Then, at intervals purposely betraying his presence by a heavy step or a word he searched from floor to floor. He aimed to give the intruder warning of his whereabouts, but not quite definite enough to furnish accurate pistol range. He hoped the fellow would grasp at a forlorn chance of escape while he thought his pursuer was upstairs. The outside men could be counted on to nip that hope.

Each time he paused to listen, the old house, displaying that devilish attribute of all dark and nearly empty houses, seemed alive with insidious, suppressed sounds. A creaking board made his heart leap violently. He wasted breathless minutes listening to the nibbling of an industrious mouse in a wainscoting. In more than one black room he could have sworn that he heard soft breathing and felt a human presence. In the lower hall he nearly discharged his automatic into a mirror when an umbrella that had been leaned against the wall at an unstable angle slid clamorously to the floor.

He could have shouted with relief when pursuit of these tactics from attic to basement had brought no results. Inquiry of the officers outside showed that no one had made a break for the open.

Sorely puzzled, Blaney returned to his companions on the second floor.

Meantime the gentleman in dinner-coat, disregarding warnings, had been tiptoeing about doing some independent investigating with a small pocket-flash such as some gentlemen carry, handy in locating anything from a runaway collar-button to an unresponsive keyhole. To all appearances his nerves responded to none of the thrills that had beset the officer.

He returned to the rendezvous at the same time as Blaney. The third man was stolidly awaiting them, his phlegmatic face showing little excitement over the search.

"He's not on this floor," Dinner-Coat announced triumphantly. "I've pried into every cupboard and under every piece of furniture and locked up each room when I finished. Got the keys in my pocket. He can't dodge round and hide on this floor again."

"Gad! You had yer nerve!" admired Policeman Blaney. "You oughta be a cop. You wouldn't be so foolish if ye were, though. He'd 'a' had the drop on ye in any one o' them rooms if he'd been there."

"Oh, I don't know. I thought I'd get away with it. Now I suggest this. Let's scour the rest of the place together. We'll call out to the beggar that there's three of us, and prove it by spreading out in the dark in each hall and each putting in a word. We'll remind him that if he tries shooting he can get only one at the most, and we'll have him for murder. That'll smoke him out. I'll volunteer to carry the flash. I'll hold it so he won't have a good mark to shoot at. We'll light up and lock each room after we've searched it."

"All right," agreed the officer, "if this other gentleman's game."

"I'm game."

"Ye both oughta be on the force," muttered the Bluecoat.

As they were feeling their way about in the third-floor hall, the flash in the hand of the volunteer torch-bearer suddenly went on, throwing their host into a circle of light. There was a sibilant duet of profanity.

"Beg pardon!" apologized Dinner-Coat. "It was an accident."

But it seemed to amuse him as much as it alarmed the others, for he chuckled again as he moved off.

FROM room to room, through every possible hiding-place, from attic to cellar, they scoured their perilous way in search for the human rattlesnake. But there was no response to their offer of armistice and no sound to betray a thief's presence.

Back on the second floor the officer snapped on a light.

"Nothin' doin'," he decided. "If it wasn't for the busted bars I'd say this gentleman's eyes had come a trick on him. The fellow musta caught on to you, sir, and slipped right out again while you were after me."

"But," demurred Dinner-Coat, "those same bars prove that he didn't escape that way. I arranged them so carefully that he couldn't have disturbed them without my knowing it when I came back.

"Any other place he could be hiding in that we haven't thought of, or any other way he could have slipped out?" he added to their host. "How about secret passages? Have you had the house long? Some of these old places were polite gambling shows once. You sure there aren't any secret nooks, sliding panels with hidden springs; all that sort of stuff?"

"Not a cranny," he replied, evidently much relieved. "No chance of that secret stuff. Every other window and door locked on the inside, too, including the night lock on the front door."

"There's just one answer," decided the officer. "He was a sly card, that fellow. He prob'ly was listenin' just inside that window while you was fixin' the bars nice an' neat, an' when he came out he fixed 'em again the way he found 'em. Prob'ly slipped along up the street in the shadow and hid in another area till he had a chance to skip. He's miles away by now."

"Maybe so," grudgingly admitted Dinner-Coat. He seemed dissatisfied and distraught, as though he were still debating the subject within himself.

"Well, I'm sorry the cuss got away," admitted their host. "Nevertheless, you've driven him off and saved me from being burgled. Let me show my appreciation by offering you a drink before you go. I have a flask of passable stuff in my room. Was just about to have a night-cap when the show began."

"I ain't supposed to," grinned Officer Blaney; "but it's a dry town these days, and I might this once."

"Drink, drink, and be merry, for to-morrow ye are dry," chuckled Dinner-Coat.

They repaired to their host's bedroom.

"Here's to the bravest and most painstaking of our police force," offered their host over his own three fingers of red liquor.

Blaney acknowledged the toast abstractedly, either not noting or ignoring its fulsomeness and the subtle note of irony behind it.

He was still puzzling over the mystery of the vanishing crook. He was still listening for some telltale sound somewhere in the dark spaces of the house.

"I'll have a job explainin' this to the chief!" he sighed, as he rose to go.

"Don't worry about that," their host assured him. "I'll speak a good word for you at headquarters to-morrow.

"And you, sir," he added, turning to the other gentleman, "I can't thank you enough for your timely discovery. I might have been murdered in my bed."

"It's nothing," the other responded. "By the way, shall we introduce ourselves?

"But Dinner-Coat's move was still swifter. In the same instant the startled host found 'The handcuffs, officer!'

We are neighbours and should know each other after this."

"My name is Forsythe—James H. Forsythe," responded their host, a trifle stiffly it seemed.

Dinner-Coat leisurely drew a handsome, monogrammed card-case from his pocket, selected an engraved card, and handed it to the other.

"My card, sir!"

Their host took it somewhat hesitantly and glanced at it. Surprised terror swept his face. His hand flashed to his weapon.

But Dinner-Coat's move was still swifter. In the same instant the startled host found his revolver arm clamped to his side and the other man's unwavering automatic peering into his face.

"The handcuffs, officer!" purred Dinner-Coat.

"What the devil's this?" demanded Blaney, too dumbfounded to move.

his revolver arm clamped to his side and the other man's automatic peering into his face. purred Dinner-Coat."

"It means that our supposed host is the fellow you've been hunting for, and that I'm the real host," explained Dinner-Coat. "If you'll pick up my card which this gentleman dropped, you'll see."

On the card the astonished patrolman read the name, "James H. Forsythe."

"You'll find a lot more of them in this card-case, which also bears my monogram. You'll find in my pocket letters addressed to me, the keys to this house, and other evidence if you need more proof than the bare fact that this fellow tried to shoot me the moment he read my name. Also my name's in the telephone book, hanging on a brass hook over the wall phone in the alcove under the stairs on the first floor."

Blaney came out of his trance and produced the handcuffs.

"The deal's off! You got me," sullenly admitted the captive. "But why all the movin'-picture stuff?"

"Yes, sir," Blaney joined in, sharing his captive's indignation. "Couldn't you have told me who you were in the first place, sir, an' me gettin' grey hairs huntin' a fake crook in the dark?"

"Now, now, gentlemen, let's be friends. I admit I was a bit melodramatic. I owe you something of an apology, too, officer. I took it for granted at first that you understood I was the tenant of the house. I didn't realize I hadn't made that clear till I saw you had been taken in by the impromptu bluff our friend here put up when we surprised him at work. But, you see, at that moment I was afraid he might have the drop on us and shoot first if I warned you. So I played for time by pretending to be an unsuspecting outsider. Then he played the game so cleverly that I simply had to watch his work for a while. He made one slip. When I flashed the light on him upstairs he was fumbling around like a stranger in the house. I thought you'd get wise then, officer. I've had to deal with gentlemen crooks before, but not those of the house-breaking class. You see, my work for the Government has to do with running down Uncle Sam's crooked enemies. So I had a semi-professional interest in this."

He turned back his coat for an instant, and the badge Blaney saw there swept away any further captious criticism.

"And now, gentlemen," the reinstated householder continued, "as your real host, allow me to do the honours. I know where the sideboard is with the house's main supply of liquors. We'll have one more round before this pleasant party breaks up.

"You see, you made one other slip, my friend," he added to the handcuffed man; "but I can't blame the officer for not noting that. If you'd been letter perfect you'd have led us down to the high-grade article the house affords, instead of treating us to the—ah, pardon me—rather inferior stuff in the flask you brought in with you."

They adjourned to the dining-room and had that one more, even their ex-host joining in.

After he had seen the officer and his prisoner out, Dinner-Coat stood for a moment musing in the hall. He was chuckling again and pulling at the imaginary moustache, recently sacrificed for business reasons.

Then he returned leisurely to the bedroom on the second floor and restored to the business suit hanging in the cupboard the card-case, letters, keys, and secret service badge he had found there while assisting Blaney in his hunt and for which he had no further use. That painstaking search of the house had also revealed the location of the wall safe behind the sideboard in the dining-room. He next turned his attention to that.

A few minutes later, with the Forsythe silver and jewellery in roomy, false pockets under his dinner-coat, he stepped boldly out of the front door of No. 10.

A BRIEF shower had cooled the air while the drama within was being enacted. A gentle breeze fanned his cheeks. The pearling of early dawn tinted the sky above the housetops. He paused on the dark steps and drew a deep, satisfied breath.

"What a night of midsummer madness!" he chuckled. "And who of us was the maddest, I ask you?"

Then, in leisurely fashion, he descended the steps and into the arms of Officer Blaney.

"'Tis as I thought, but I waited for ye to prove it," said that patiently watchful waiter as he snapped on the handcuffs. "Ye see, me boy, if ye hadn't tried to play host too ye woulda got away with it. But when ye led us into the dining-room ye started to push the door open whilst it properly opened toward ye. I misdoubted then that any gentleman of parts belongin' at home wouldn't know which way a door swung open to a grand layout of booze such as ye led us to."

WILL YOU GIVE A CHILD A DAY'S HOLIDAY?

THERE are 250,000 poor children who will not enjoy even a day's holiday in the country this year unless it is provided for them by Pearson's Fresh Air Fund. The Fund operates in 42 of the large towns and cities of the United Kingdom. All money subscribed is spent directly on the Children, the expenses of management being borne by the Promoters.

Fifteen Pence defrays the cost of a day's outing; One Pound pays for a fortnight's holiday. Donors of £13 or anything over that sum can name the party of children for which the money pays.

Donations, however small, will be thankfully received by Mr. Ernest Kessell, Hon. Secretary, Fresh Air Fund, 226, Great Portland Street, London, W.1.

The Uncharted Coast

by A. CONAN DOYLE

No. IV.—AN OLD STORY RE-TOLD.

WHETHER the reader belongs to that majority who are incredulous upon the subject, or to that increasing minority who accept the evidence, he can hardly fail to be interested in the circumstances in which the whole strange psychic movement arose. The student is aware that there was a long preparatory stage which began with Swedenborg and Mesmer, and ended with Andrew Jackson Davis, called the Poughkeepsie Seer, who at an early age, without education, wrote or dictated one of the deepest, most comprehensive explanations of the universe ever framed. Passing these we will begin the narrative with the happenings of Hydesville, and give some account of these less-known developments which followed the new movement, sometimes to its great glory and sometimes to its temporary degradation.

The hamlet of Hydesville, near Rochester, in the State of New York, consisted of a cluster of wooden houses of a very humble type. In one of these, a residence which would hardly pass the requirements of a British district council surveyor, there began this development which will, in my opinion, prove to be far the most important thing which America has given to the common weal of the world. It was inhabited by a decent farmer family of the name of Fox—a name which, by a curious coincidence, has been already registered in religious history as that of the evangel of the Quakers. Besides the father and mother, who were Methodists in religion, there were two children resident in the house at the time when the manifestations reached such a point of intensity that they attracted general attention. These children were the daughters, Margaret, aged fifteen, and Kate, aged twelve.

About the beginning of 1848 many loud noises like sudden blows had been heard both by day and by night in the house, accompanied by a vibration of the furniture. Rats, mice, and the hammering of a neighbouring cobbler were all put forward as explanations, and each proved equally inadequate. As the spring advanced these sounds became more insistent and more varied in character, and occasionally were accompanied by actual motions of the furniture. It was soon observed that daylight was inimical to the phenomena, and the idea of trickery was thereby suggested, but careful watch by Mr. Fox failed to detect anything of the kind. Finally, upon March 31st, there was a very loud and continued outbreak of inexplicable sounds. It was upon this evening that one of the great points in the history of psychic evolution was reached, for it was then that young Kate Fox, having lost all sense of fear in the presence of that which use had made familiar, challenged the unseen power to repeat the snaps of her fingers. This challenge, though given in flippant words, was instantly accepted. Each snap was answered by a knock. However humble the operator at either end, the spiritual telegraph was at last working, and it was left to the patience and moral earnestness of the human race to determine how

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high might be the uses to which it was put in the future. Unexplained forces were many in the world, but here was a force claiming to have independent intelligence at the back of it. That was the supreme sign of a new departure. "Fancy a new spiritual departure in a frame house in an American hamlet!" Yes, and fancy a previous one in a camel-driver's tent in Arabia, and before that the greatest of all in a carpenter's shop in Judea! *Exaltavit humiles!*

Mrs. Fox was amazed at this development, and at the further discovery that the force could apparently see as well as hear, for when Kate snapped her fingers without sound the rap still responded. The mother asked a series of questions, the answers to which, given in numerals, showed a greater knowledge of her own affairs than she herself possessed, for the raps insisted that she had had seven children, whereas she protested that she had six, until one who had died early came back to her mind. A neighbour, Mrs. Redfield, was called in, and her amusement was changed to wonder, and finally to awe, as she also listened to the correct answers to intimate questions.

The neighbours came flocking in as some rumours of these wonders got about, and the two children were carried off by one of them, while Mrs. Fox went to spend the night at Mrs. Redfield's. In their absence the phenomena went on exactly the same as before, which disposes once for all of those theories of cracking toes and dislocating knees which have been so frequently put forward by people unaware of the true facts. The happenings of the night were at once recorded and were printed in pamphlet form within three weeks of the event, so that it would be difficult to get more prompt and direct testimony, which was subscribed to by a number of disinterested witnesses.

HAVING formed a sort of informal committee of investigation, the crowd, in shrewd Yankee fashion, spent a large part of the night of March 31st in playing question and answer with the unseen intelligence. According to its own account he was a spirit, he had been injured in that house, he rapped out the name of a former occupant who had injured him, he was thirty-one years old at the time of death which was five years before, he had been murdered for money, he had been buried in the cellar ten feet deep. On descending to the cellar dull, heavy thumps, coming apparently from under the earth, broke out when the investigator stood at the centre. There was no sound at other times. That, then, was the place of burial! It was a neighbour named Duesler who, first of all modern men, called over the alphabet and got answers by raps on the letters. In this way the name of the dead man was obtained —Charles B. Rosma. The idea of connected messages was not developed until four months later, when Isaac Post, a Quaker of Rochester, was the first pioneer. Such, in very brief outline, were the events of March 31st, which were continued and confirmed upon the succeeding night, when not less than a couple of hundred people had assembled round the house. Upon April 2nd it was observed that the raps came in the day as well as at night.

Excavations were begun in the cellar, but the spring thaw and a swollen river had flooded the land, and water was struck a foot or so below the surface. When the summer came, a hole was dug by David Fox, the young son, who had come from a distant farm after the disturbances broke out. He was aided by Henry Bush, Lyman Granger of Rochester, and others. His account of what occurred was published in Capron's "Modern Spiritualism," 1855, and was confirmed personally in conversation with the Hon. Dale Owen, so that the evidence is very clear and direct. They passed a plank five feet down, and below it came on some crockery, charcoal, and quicklime, under which was some human hair, several bones, and part of a human skull. Clearer evidence of murder and its concealment could hardly be asked for. These were corroborative details, for a young girl, Lucretia Pulver, came forward with an account of how a pedlar had called there while she was acting as "help" to Mr. and Mrs. Bell. He had remained for the night, while she, the girl, had been sent away, and was kept away three days. The pedlar had promised to call at her father's house, but he never came. On her return she had heard for the first time the rappings and noises in the house. She observed that the centre of the cellar was soft, which was explained by Mrs. Bell as being due to rat-holes. Afterwards, Mr. Bell carried down some earth and was at work for some time. Shortly afterwards the Bells left the house and the neighbourhood, but their successors, the Weekmans, were conscious of the same noises which finally culminated under the Fox tenancy.

As might be expected, Bell, who was a blacksmith by trade, vigorously denied this accusation and produced many certificates as a proof that he was a man of good character. The spiritual story was also weakened by the fact that the man Rosma could not be traced in Orange County, New York, whence he professed to have come, and a search for five alleged children was equally fruitless. This is less remarkable as he was by profession a wanderer. It must be admitted that the case against Bell needed further corroboration before it could be called substantial. Two

great undoubted results did emerge, however, which have never been shaken, that the origin of the raps could by no means be explained, and that they did convey the unknown fact that a human body had been buried in the cellar. This is the vital core of the whole matter, for it touched that which is of eternal interest to all of us, while the question of individual guilt is temporary and incidental.

THE danger of blindly following alleged spirit guidance was clearly shown some months later in the neighbouring town of Rochester, where a man disappeared under suspicious circumstances. An enthusiastic Spiritualist had messages by raps which announced a murder. The canal was dragged, and the wife of the missing man was actually ordered to enter the canal, which nearly cost her her life. Some months later the absentee returned, having fled to Canada to avoid a writ for debt. This, as may well be imagined, was a blow to the young cult. The public did not then understand what even now is so little understood, that death causes no change in the human spirit, that mischievous and humorous entities abound, and that the inquirer must use his own instincts and his own common sense at every turn. "Try the spirits that ye may know them." In the same year, in the same district, the truth of this new philosophy upon the one side, and its limitations and dangers on the other, were most clearly set forth. These dangers are with us still. The silly man, the arrogant inflated man, the cock-sure man, is always a safe butt. Every observer has had some trick played upon him. I have myself had my faith sorely shaken by deception until some compensating proof has come along to assure me that it was only a lesson which I had received, and that it was no more fiendish or even remarkable that disembodied intelligences should be hoaxers, than that the same intelligence inside a human body should find amusement in the same foolish way.

The first effect of the new dispensation was to bring utter misery and ruin to the Fox family. Within their house there were constant disturbances from the insistent manifestations, while from without they were plagued by sight-seers and wonder-mongers, many of whom looked upon the unfortunate people as being concerned in something diabolical. Kate was sent away to Rochester to join her married sister, Mrs. Fish, but her absence appears to have had no effect upon the sounds which continued to disturb the family, who at last abandoned Hydesville altogether, hoping that the manifestations would remain behind. It speedily became evident, however, that the unseen powers were no longer attached to the place, but that they specially associated themselves with the two girls, for they were as insistent in the town as in the hamlet. In vain the family prayed with their Methodist friends that relief should come. In vain also were the

The home of the Fox family, in which modern spirit messages were first received. It now bears the inscription "Here Spiritualism originated in 1848."

exorcisms of the ministers of various creeds. Beyond joining with loud raps in the Amens, the unseen presences took no notice of these religious exercises.

The whole course of the movement had now widened and taken a more important turn. It was no longer a murdered man calling for justice. The pedlar seemed to have been used as a pioneer, and now that he had found the opening and the method, a myriad of Intelligences were swarming at his back. Isaac Post had instituted the method of spelling by raps, and messages were pouring through. According to these the whole system had been devised by the contrivance of a band of thinkers and inventors upon the spirit plane, foremost among whom was Benjamin Franklin, whose eager mind and electrical knowledge in earth life might well qualify him for such a venture. Whether this claim was true or not, it is a fact that Rosma dropped out of the picture at this stage, and that the intelligent knockings purported to be from the deceased friends of those inquirers who were prepared to take a serious interest in the matter, and to gather in reverent mood to receive the messages. That they still lived and still loved was the constant message from the beyond, accompanied by many material tests, which confirmed the wavering faith of the new adherents of the movement. When asked for their methods of working and the laws which governed them, the answers were from the beginning exactly what they are now—that it was a matter concerned with human and spirit magnetism, that some who were richly endowed with this physical property were mediums, that this endowment was not necessarily allied to morality or intelligence, and that the condition of harmony was especially necessary to secure good results. In seventy-two years we have learned very little more—and after all these years the primary law of harmony is invariably broken at the so-called test séances, the members of which imagine that they have disproved the philosophy when they obtain no results, whereas they have actually confirmed it.

In one of the early communications the Fox sisters were assured that " these manifestations would not be confined to them, but would go all over the world." This prophecy was soon in a fair way to be fulfilled, for these new powers, and further developments of them which included the discerning and hearing of spirits and the movement of objects without contact, appeared in many circles which were independent of the Fox family. In an incredibly short space of time the movement, with many eccentricities and phases of fanaticism, had swept over the Northern and Eastern States of the Union, always retaining that solid core of actual tangible fact, which might be occasionally simulated by impostors but always reasserted itself to the serious investigator who could shake himself free from preconceived prejudice. Disregarding for the moment these wider developments, let us continue the story of the original circles at Rochester.

The spirit messages had urged upon the small band of pioneers a public demonstration of their powers in an open meeting at Rochester—a proposition which was naturally appalling to two shy country girls and to their friends. So incensed were the discarnate Guides by the opposition of their earthly agents that they threatened to suspend the whole movement for a generation, and did actually desert them completely for some weeks. At the end of that time communication was restored and the believers, chastened by this interval of thought, put themselves unreservedly into the hands of the outside forces, promising that they would dare all in the cause. It was no light matter. A few of the clergy, notably a Methodist named the Rev. A. H. Jervis, rallied to their aid, but the majority thundered from their pulpits against them, and the mob eagerly joined in the cowardly sport of heretic-baiting. On November 14th, 1849, the Spiritualists held their first meeting at the Corinthian Hall, the largest available in Rochester. The audience, to its credit, listened with attention to the exposition of facts from Mr. Capron of Auburn, the principal speaker. A committee of five representative citizens was then selected to examine into the matter and to report upon the following evening, when the meeting would reassemble. So certain was it that this report would be unfavourable that the *Rochester Democrat* is stated to have had its leading article prepared, with the headline: " Entire Exposure of the Rapping Humbug." The result, however, caused the editor to hold his hand. The committee reported that the raps were undoubted facts, though the information was not invariably correct. They added that these raps came on walls and doors some distance from the girls, causing a sensible vibration. " They entirely failed to find any means by which it could be done."

This report was received with disapproval by the audience and a second committee from among the dissentients was formed. This investigation was conducted in the office of a lawyer. Kate, for some reason, was away, and only Mrs. Fish and Margaret present. None the less, the sounds continued as before, though a Dr. Langworthy was introduced to test the possibility of ventriloquism. The final report was that " the sounds were

heard, and their thorough investigation had conclusively shown them to be produced neither by machinery nor ventriloquism, though what the agent is they were unable to determine."

Again the audience turned down the report of their own committee, and again a deputation was chosen from among the most extreme opponents, one of whom vowed that if he could not find out the trick he would throw himself over the Falls of the Genessee River. Their examination was thorough to the length of brutality, and a committee of ladies were associated with it. The latter stripped the frightened girls, who wept bitterly under their afflictions. Their dresses were then tied tightly round their ankles, and they were placed upon glass and other insulators. The committee was forced to report "when they were standing on pillows with a handkerchief tied round the bottom of their dresses, tight to the ankles, we all heard the rapping on the wall and floor distinctly." The committee further testified that their questions, some of them mental, had been answered correctly.

Kate Fox, the first modern medium.

SO long as the public looked upon the movement as a sort of a joke it was prepared to be tolerantly amused, but when these successive reports put the matter in a more serious light, a wave of blackguardism swept over the town, which reached such a pitch that Mr. Willetts, a gallant Quaker, was compelled at the fourth public meeting to declare that "the mob of ruffians who designed to lynch the girls should do so, if they attempted it, over his dead body." There was a disgraceful riot, the young women were smuggled out by a back door, and reason and justice were for the moment clouded over by force and folly. Then, as now, the minds of the average men of the world were so crammed with the things that do not matter that they had no space for the things that do matter. But Fate is never in a hurry and the movement went on. Many accepted the findings of the successive committees as being final, and indeed it is difficult to see how the alleged facts could have been more severely tested. At the same time this strong new fermenting wine began to burst some of the old bottles into which it was poured to the excusable disgust of the public.

The many discreet, serious, and religious circles were for a season almost obscured by swollen-headed ranters, who imagined themselves to be in touch with every high entity from the Apostles downwards, some even claiming the direct afflatus of the Holy Ghost and emitting messages which were only saved from being blasphemous by their crudity and absurdity. One community of these fanatics, who called themselves the Apostolic Circle of Mountain Cove, particularly distinguished themselves by their extreme claims and furnished good material for the enemies of the new dispensation. The great body of Spiritualists turned away in disapproval from such exaggerations, but were unable to prevent them. Many well-attested supernormal phenomena came to support the failing spirits of those who were distressed by the excesses of the fanatics. On one occasion, which is particularly convincing and well-reported, two bodies of investigators in separate rooms received the same message simultaneously from some central force which called itself Benjamin Franklin. This double message was: "There will be great changes in the nineteenth

century. Things that now look dark will be made plain. The world will be enlightened." It must be admitted that the prophecy has up to now been only partially fulfilled—and it may at the same time be conceded that, with some startling exceptions, the forecasts of the Spirit people have not been remarkable for accuracy, especially where the element of time is concerned.

THE question has often been asked: "What was the purpose of so strange a movement at this particular time, granting that it is all that it claims to be?" Governor Tallmadge, a United States Senator of repute, was one of the early converts to the new cult, and he has left it upon record that he asked this question upon two separate occasions in two different years from different mediums. The answer in each case was almost identical. The first said: "It is to draw mankind together in harmony and to convince sceptics of the immortality of the soul." The second said: "To unite mankind and to convince sceptics of the immortality of the soul." Surely this is no ignoble ambition and does not justify those narrow and bitter attacks from ministers and the less progressive of their flocks from which Spiritualists have up to the present day had to suffer. The first half of the definition is, I think, particularly important, for I believe that one of the ultimate results of this movement will be to unite Christianity upon a common basis so strong and, indeed, self-sufficient that the quibbles which separate the Churches of to-day will be seen in their true proportion and will be swept away or disregarded. One could even hope that such a movement might spread beyond the bounds of Christianity and throw down some of the barriers which stand between great sections of the human race.

Within two years from the crisis at Hydesville, the Fox sisters, still little more than children, were in New York, in the centre of the huge public discussion which raged round the subject. They stayed as guests for a short time in the house of Horace Greeley, the famous editor of the *New York Tribune*, one of the clearest thinkers in America, and whilst there gave constant exhibitions of their strange powers. Greeley had the courage to imperil the fortunes of his great newspaper by publicly stating that the phenomena which he had tested were undoubtedly genuine. "We devoted what time we could spare from our duties, out of three days, to this subject," he wrote. "It would be the basest cowardice not to say that we are convinced beyond a doubt of the ladies' perfect integrity and good faith. Whatever may be the origin or cause of the rappings, the ladies in whose presence they occur do not make them. We tested this thoroughly and to our entire satisfaction. Their conduct and bearing are as unlike that of deceivers as possible." So said Horace Greeley, cute Yankee and man of the world, after personal investigation. Against this, what is the worth of the opinion of people who even now talk nonsense about cracking joints and ventriloquism?

What impressed the New Yorkers as much as the actual sounds was the extreme accuracy of the answers and the fact that unspoken questions were replied to as readily as those which were audible. We have records of one particular séance at which there were more famous men assembled than have ever perhaps been present at one demonstration. Among them were Fenimore Cooper, the novelist, Bancroft, the historian, Cullen Bryant and N. P. Willis, poets, Bigelow, Dr. Griswold, with several doctors and clergymen. As befitted such a company the phenomena were mental rather than material, but absolutely convincing. Mrs. Fox and the three daughters were the mediums. It is interesting to note that half an hour elapsed before any sounds were heard. Strong brains charged with prejudice were present and time was needed, even by those remarkable mediums, to harmonize the conditions. Then at last came slight sounds, increasing gradually in volume until they were very clear. Each member of the company in turn asked questions, some mentally, some aloud, and all attested that the correct answers were given by the knockings. The record is too long to give in detail, but some of the information was so exact and so unusual that it was absolutely convincing. It is said that nearly all the guests were converted by this remarkable experience, and that this knowledge coming when their feet were, as the future proved, on the very threshold of death, was of inestimable comfort to Cooper and to Willis.

In the presence of these extraordinary happenings it may be imagined that American science was not silent. It was loud in its mockery and disapproval. At last the flood rising from that small spring at Hydesville had become so great that it could no longer be ignored. The religious exorcisms had failed. Could not science put a stop once for all to this disturbing intrusion? There were two scientists in the United States at that time who had a European reputation. One was Agassiz, the naturalist, the other Robert Hare, the chemist, who invented among other things the oxy-hydrogen blowpipe. It was Robert Hare who went forth to slay the new delusion. He started in that thoroughly unscientific frame of mind in

"Mr. Willetts, a gallant Quaker, was compelled to declare that 'the mob of ruffians who designed to lynch the girls should do so, if they attempted it, over his dead body.'"

which science has always approached the question. He felt called upon, he said, "to bring whatever influence he possessed to the attempt to stem the tide of popular madness which, in defiance of reason and science, was fast setting in favour of the gross delusion called Spiritualism." This can hardly be called an impartial method of approaching an inquiry, and can only be compared with Faraday's contemporary assertion that in investigating such a matter one should make up one's mind beforehand what is possible and what is not. Here was a brave and honest man, however. The huge tome which recorded his investigation lies upon my table as I write. It is adorned with pictures of the spring balances, double tables, and other appliances with which he endeavoured to confound these heretics, and was himself confounded. So searching was his investigation that every other one has been forestalled by it, for every possible source of error was eliminated. As a result Professor Hare declared after a year that he had been entirely mistaken, and that the claims of the new philosophy not only as to the phenomena, but as to their source and meaning, were absolutely justified. For this he was boycotted and bullied by the American Scientific Association, which seems to have behaved as unwisely as all of our own scientific bodies in its unreasoning opposition to what it did not comprehend. Whilst the report of this eminent scientific man was ignored, great stress was laid upon the absurd report of three unknown medical men of Buffalo, who declared that in their opinion the sounds made by the Fox sisters were caused by the repeated partial dislocations of their knee-joints. How these dislocations answered unspoken questions was not explained.

THE persecution endured by Professor Hare was repeated in the case of Judge Edmonds, head of the High Court of New York, who had also approached the movement with a view to exposing it, but who found himself confounded by the appearance of phenomena within his own family circle, and by the development of his own daughter into a medium, possessing in some directions greater powers than the Fox sisters. Like Professor Hare, he proclaimed his conversion in a book, and had to leave the Bench in consequence. Such intolerance was deplorable, and yet there is this excuse for it, that numerous cranks calling themselves Spiritualists had burst into all sorts of wild theories, and also that the vile race of spurious mediums, or of mediums who eked out real powers by faked phenomena, were beginning to appear and to cause those scandals with which we are too familiar. Unable to distinguish the true from the counterfeit, the public, busy with its own affairs and impatient with the claims of another world, was glad to dismiss the whole subject as one vast delusion. Its hold, however, was too strong, and before the year 1860 it was calculated that a quarter of the population of the States believed in the new message, while it had penetrated into every country of the world.

A word must be said as to the tragic fate of the two younger Fox sisters, a subject which is painful to Spiritualists and yet must be faced. Both fell victims to that dipsomania which was hereditary in the family. Each had made a remarkably good marriage, Margaret becoming the wife of Dr. Kane, the famous Arctic explorer, while Kate married Mr. Jencken, a member of the English Bar. The latter was very thoroughly tested by Professor Crookes, who was a most severe critic of psychic powers, though opponents of the movement represent him as credulous. Margaret became a Roman Catholic, and high influences were used, according to her own account, to place her in a convent. What with religious excitement and her hereditary weakness she fell in her later years into a pitiable state, in which she alternately denounced Spiritualism, proclaiming herself an impostor, and recanted her statement with the most solemn vows. Personally, I am of opinion that she was by no means free from the suspicion that when psychic power was wanting she supplemented it by fraud. As to her final assertions and denials I think that Father Thurston may be right when he says that both were in a sense true. Mr. Isaac Funk, the famous lexicographer, says of her in her later years, "For five dollars she would have denied her mother and sworn to anything."

I have said that such a fate befalling the early mediums is painful to Spiritualists, but it has small bearing upon their faith. A medium is in no sense a teacher or an example, but is a passive instrument for forces outside herself. There have been, and are, many mediums who have been of saintly mould. There have been others who have yielded to some human weakness, very especially to drink. Their powers and their message are to be held distinct from themselves, as a Catholic would hold that a bad priest may celebrate a true sacrament, or a materialist that a foolish operator may transmit a wise telegram. These weaknesses delay the acceptance of the new knowledge. It still stands upon the threshold—but the door is slowly opening.

THE BEST SAUCE

By William Caine

ILLUSTRATED BY JOHN CAMPBELL

I.

MENDOZA, having agreed to draw an advertisement of Sankey's Sauce, conceived and sketched in pencil the picture-story which is now to be described.

The first drawing showed a poor ragged devil with sunken cheeks and cavernous eyes glaring wolfishly in through the window of a cook-house at a pan of sizzling sausages.

The second showed an amiable philanthropist, in a fur coat and a silk hat (the hall-marks of great wealth), inviting the scarecrow indoors to a blow-out.

The third showed the tramp beginning his meal.

The fourth, fifth, and sixth showed its progress, with waiters bringing more food every minute, the host beaming more and more benevolently, the proprietor of the place displaying more and more delight, and the guest growing each moment fatter.

In the seventh the absorber of victuals was at last gorged. He had put on about ten stone. Waiters were still offering him dishes of various kinds, but he was waving them reluctantly away, while the philanthropist consulted anxiously, aside, with the proprietor.

In the eighth the now completely-stuffed guest lay back comatose in his chair, just able to hold up a hand in protest at the very idea of his swallowing another mouthful. The proprietor was seen to trot off with a very knowing smile on his face.

In the ninth picture he had returned, carrying a huge bottle labelled Sankey's Sauce, and he was offering this to the guest.

In the tenth the guest was drinking deeply from this bottle.

In the eleventh he was sitting up, grasping his knife and fork and grinning delightedly. The philanthropist and the proprietor were rubbing their hands with joy.

In the twelfth the Gargantuan meal was resumed; some of the waiters loaded the guest's plate with food, while others hastened up with further sirloins, ducks, pork-pies, plum-puddings, and other comestibles.

The innuendo conveyed by all this was that Hunger, as a Best Sauce, is not in it with Sankey's.

When Mendoza came to consider what he had drawn, he found himself content with all but his starving man.

"No," he decided, "this fellow won't do. Here is where a model is necessary. The hungry man of this story must be something rather special in the way of hungry men. He must be a positive Spectre of Famine. He must not be funny at all, and at present he is funny. Rigid realism is what I want here. For my first presentation of this poor starving devil a remorseless adherence to Truth is indicated. For so I shall get my effect by contrast, and earn faithfully the two hundred guineas which I am to receive for this drawing."

Forthwith he took his hat and sketch-book and went out into the streets of London. He wandered long and far. And so, towards evening, still in search of his subject, he came across Holborn into Lincoln's Inn Fields.

Many haggard and desperate faces had he seen, but none of them had satisfied him wholly, and he meant wholly to be satisfied. If he hunted a week he proposed to get what he wanted.

In Lincoln's Inn Fields he got it.

II.

THE man—he was a very young one; Mendoza judged him to be not more than nineteen—sat huddled up in the corner of a bench with one hand thrust deep into his trousers-pocket. He wore a very shiny but very well-made suit of blue serge, a black neckcloth, and an apology for a cap. His face was dead-white, and his cheeks were as hollow as saucers, his eyes were sunk inches deep in his head; but his hair was reasonably short, his face was clean, and his chin was decently shaved. However empty his pockets might be, it seemed likely that they still contained at least a razor and a bit of soap—though his scissors were probably no longer there. The moment Mendoza set eyes on him he knew that his search was ended.

"Youth," he said to himself, "and Blank Despair. Abject Poverty, with Comfortable Antecedents. Fundamental Honesty, with no resource but Crime. This is my affair."

He sat down at the end of the bench, remote from the boy, who did not appear to be aware of his presence—his glassy eyes never shifted from his own toes.

"I think," said Mendoza, "you could do with some money."

The boy turned his eyes slowly sideways. Otherwise he made no movement.

"I could," he said.

"I'm an artist," said Mendoza. "You shall have five shillings if you'll let me draw you."

The boy gave a ghastly little laugh. "For five shillings," he said, "you can hang me and quarter me into the bargain. Where's your studio?"

"Chelsea."

"You'll have to drive me there. I couldn't walk it for a ten-pound note."

"I'll drive you there," said Mendoza. "Shall we be moving?"

He got up.

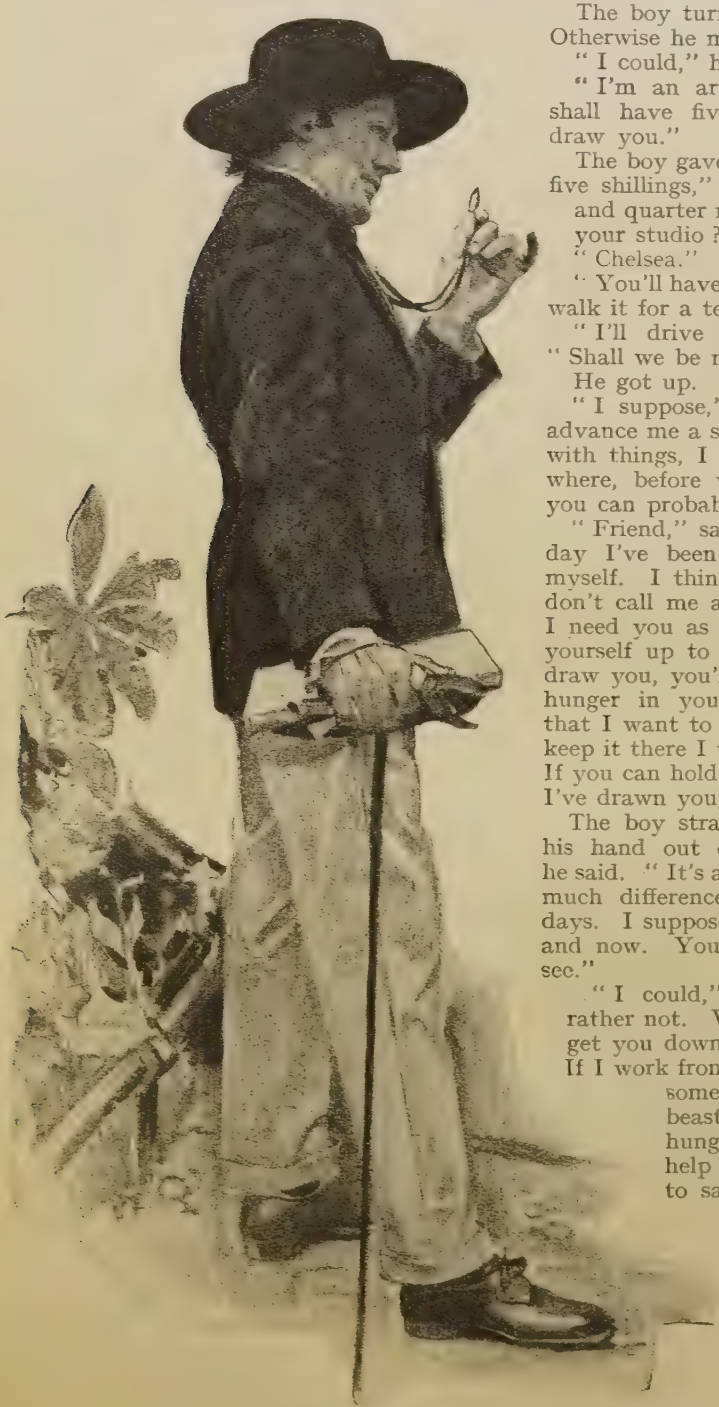
"I suppose," said the boy, "you won't advance me a shilling. If it comes to doing with things, I could do with a meal somewhere, before we start, rather better than you can probably imagine."

"Friend," said Mendoza, gently, "in my day I've been many times pretty empty myself. I think I know how you feel. So don't call me a brute, if I say No to that. I need you as you are. If you go and fill yourself up to the chin with food before I draw you, you'll be no use to me. It's the hunger in your face—God forgive me!—that I want to put on paper, and if I don't keep it there I won't find it. But look here. If you can hold out another two hours, until I've drawn you, I'll make it a sovereign."

The boy straightened his body and took his hand out of his pocket. "All right," he said. "It's a bet. Two hours won't make much difference. I've not eaten for two days. I suppose you couldn't draw me here and now. You've got your sketch-book, I see."

"I could," said Mendoza, "but I'd rather not. When I draw you, I want to get you down finally and as you're to be. If I work from a pencil-sketch I shall lose something of your quality. It's beastly to have to keep you hungry, but I'm afraid there's no help for it. However, it's for you to say. If you won't take my offer you shall have a half-crown in any case; but if you will—why, there's a sovereign in it for you."

The boy got up slowly. "You're a queer sort of chap," he said, "but you seem to be a pretty good sort of a chap. I think



"The moment Mendoza set eyes on him—

I'll earn my sovereign. Who are you, if I may ask ? "

" My name is Mendoza."

The boy's eyes lit up.

" What ? The man who did that corking poster of George Dolman in ' The Showman,' and that other for the last show at The Trafalgar, and that other for——"

" The same."

The boy sat down again. " No," he said ; " it's off."

" Off ? "

" Yes. I thought you were just an ordinary nobody. But your work's all over the shop. You can't have my face. What do you want it for, anyway ? A theatre poster ? "

" No. A Sauce Advertisement."

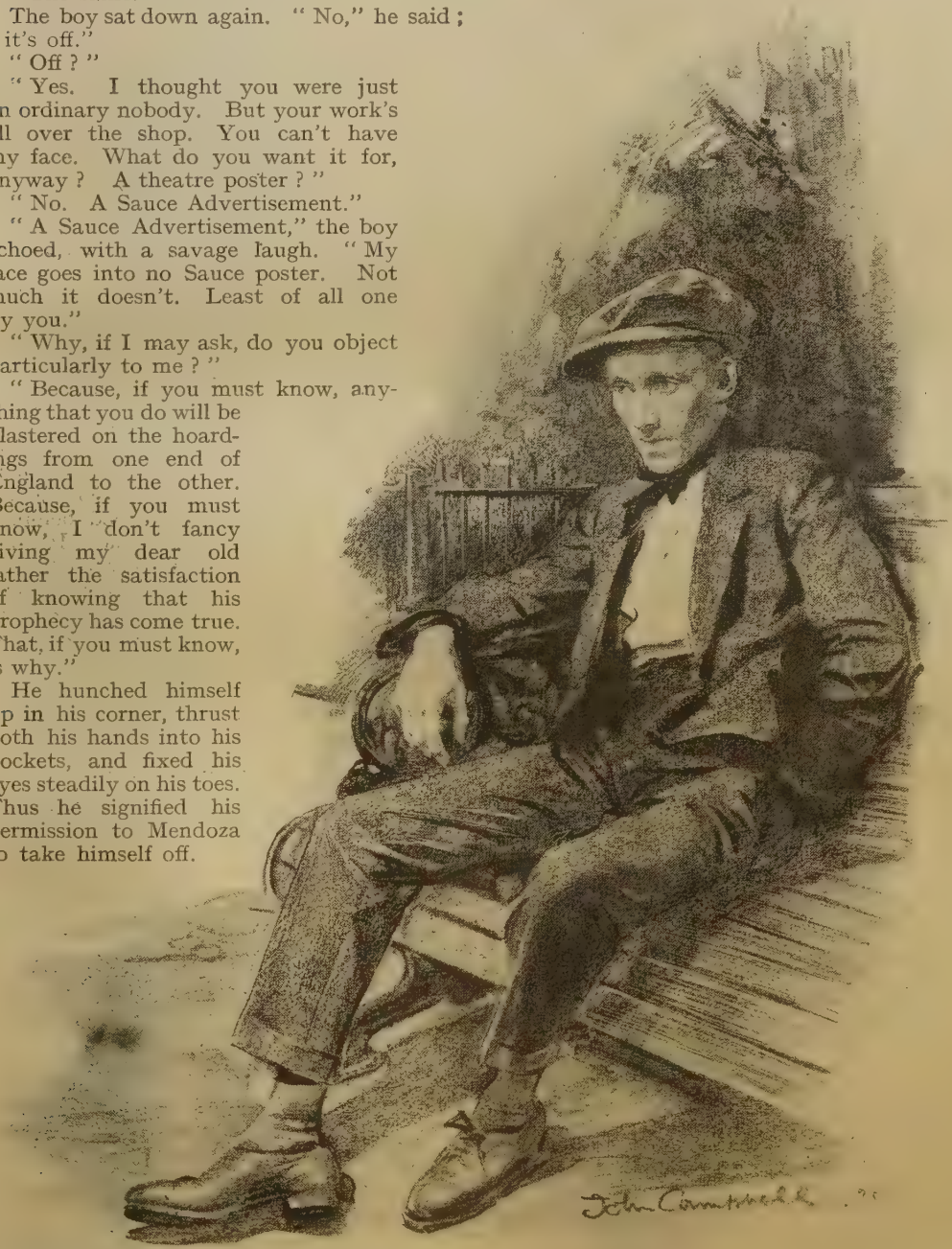
" A Sauce Advertisement," the boy echoed, with a savage laugh. " My face goes into no Sauce poster. Not much it doesn't. Least of all one by you."

" Why, if I may ask, do you object particularly to me ? "

" Because, if you must know, anything that you do will be plastered on the hoardings from one end of England to the other. Because, if you must know, I don't fancy giving my dear old father the satisfaction of knowing that his prophecy has come true. That, if you must know, is why."

He hunched himself up in his corner, thrust both his hands into his pockets, and fixed his eyes steadily on his toes. Thus he signified his permission to Mendoza to take himself off.

Mendoza stayed where he was. After a time, he said : " I think I understand. You and your father have had a difference of opinion—shall we say, as to your choice of a career ? You wished to become—shall we say, an actor ? He wished you to embrace commerce. In the end you most properly



—he knew that his search was ended."

followed your inclination, but not until the old gentleman (as became his character of angry parent) had promised you that you should starve in the gutter like a dog. Is that something like it? Yes? And now that he has proved accurate in his forecast, you cannot bring yourself to let him find it out, from seeing your pinched face on a hoarding. Is that it?"

The boy turned his head slowly and favoured Mendoza with a stare. "That's it," he said, admiringly. "That's just about it. Though, how the devil you knew I was an actor——"

"You take enough interest in theatrical posters to remark by whom they are drawn. This might lead one to suppose that you are a painter. Yet you remark with even more interest the name of the actor represented, the play which is advertised, and the theatre which has commissioned the drawing. This points to——"

"Well, you're right. But that doesn't make me any more ready to sit for you. It can't be done. Lord! how he'd gloat."

"I suppose," said Mendoza—remember that he was an artist suffering from the temptation of beholding the perfect model for a bit of work which he desired ardently to produce—"I suppose that two pounds——"

"Stow it," said the boy, roughly, "that's not fair."

"No," said Mendoza, "it isn't. All right," he went on, with a sigh, "I'll say no more. Come and get some dinner. I'm paying."

The boy got up again. "You are a good chap," he said; "I only wish I could let you have your way. But I can't. And I wish I could refuse your dinner. But I can't."

"That's all right," said Mendoza. "I began life myself by quarrelling with an uncle who wanted to put me into business. If I'd starved to death it would have given him enormous satisfaction. But I didn't. And you won't. And you needn't think that this is an act of charity I'm performing. Believe me, I very much want to improve our acquaintance. One doesn't often meet a man who'd rather keep his pride than fill his belly. Come along."

III.

THEY found an eating-house in Holborn, and here Mr. Eric Brendon—such was the name (presumably the stage-name) of Mendoza's companion—stuffed himself to the tune of a good deal more than the half-crown which his host had offered to spend on his meal. This, however, was Mendoza's fault.

"I am devilish hungry myself," he said, as they sat down, "and I am going to make my dinner here and now with you. What do you fancy?"

"Look here," said Brendon. "You've promised me half a crown. Do you mind if I eat rather less than half a crown's worth now and have the change for my next meal? If I do a few beef sandwiches and a slab of cake and a cup of cocoa now, it'll leave me——"

"Yes, I know it will," said Mendoza, "but that's not how it's going to be. Since you won't starve and sit to me at my studio to please me, you shall sit here and eat to please me. And it won't please me to see you swallowing sandwiches and cocoa while I tuck into a steak and onions. I have at this moment a soul above sandwiches and cocoa, and I shall regard you as very disobliging if you force me to consume such things. So let's hear no more about that half-crown of mine. You shall have it. You shall have it. But not in the form of victuals. This feast is an extra. Come"—he took up the bill of fare—"what do you say to pea-soup, fried whiting, steak and onions, baked potatoes, an apple dumpling, and some cheese?"

Mr. Brendon laughed. "You *are* a good chap," he said. "Have it your own way. But don't think that you'll get me to sit to you."

"My poor friend," said Mendoza, "as I've told you, when you've eaten this dinner you'll be of no manner of use to me. That's all forgotten. I've dismissed you from my mind as a model. I regard you now simply as a guest whom I wish to satisfy to the best of my ability."

A minute later Mr. Brendon was supping pea-soup. The menu sketched by Mendoza was adopted without a change. Beer was added, and coffee and cigars. When all was over the change in Mr. Brendon was astonishing.

He was still thin in the face, but he was no longer haggard. The fever light in his sunken eyes was extinguished. They sparkled now with health and hope. His cheeks had a fine warm colour in them. His back had straightened. He sat up like a man. Confidence had, in his expression, taken the place of despair. Only in a young body could this miracle have manifested itself.

Spontaneously he began to tell Mendoza the story of his life. It was extremely commonplace, and I don't propose to dwell on it. Like thousands of young men before him, he had quarrelled with his bread and butter, and counted it well lost if only he could live for Art. He had, however, found that to live for Art and to live by Art are two different things. One position on the stage he had succeeded, so far, in obtaining. He had been entrusted with the duty of playing a member of a Duke's domestic staff, a member of a Coroner's jury, a

member of a dancing club, a member of Parliament (in the great House of Commons Terrace Scene), and one or two other kinds of member in a touring melodrama. The life of this venture had ended with shocking suddenness in a South-Eastern suburb of London, and there had been no salary forthcoming. This had happened rather more than six weeks earlier than his encounter with Mendoza. Since then he had lived by pawning his possessions. He was now reduced to the few clothes in which he stood up. Meanwhile, his career as an actor had been in total abeyance.

Mendoza heard him out gravely to the end. Then he said: "And now?"

Mr. Brendon laughed. "Why," he said, "now I can go on a bit longer. If you hadn't turned up, I couldn't. That's about all. This meal'll last me a day or two, and something may happen. You never know your luck, do you?" He smiled brightly upon his host and relit his cigar, which, during his story, he had allowed to go out. "Lord!" he said, "to feel full again!" Idly he drew to himself a biscuit and began to munch it, though not with any great heartiness.

"Well," said Mendoza, who had meanwhile paid for their dinner, "I must be off." He rose and shook his guest by the hand. "Good luck to you," he said. "I wish you could have made up your mind to sit to me, but I honour your decision not to do it. I must try and find someone else who hasn't got a prophet for a father. Here," he concluded, "put this in your pocket. It'll be useful in case your luck should think worse of it and postpone turning for a bit longer."

With that he went abruptly away, leaving Mr. Brendon to stare with goggling eyes at the five-pound note which had been thrust into his hand. Before the boy had recovered from his astonishment, Mendoza was out of the restaurant and had leapt into a passing taxi-cab. By the time Brendon could reach the door the artist was well on his way to Chelsea.

IV.

TWO days later, towards evening, Mendoza came back to his studio tired out and quite despondent. Though he had spent most of the intervening time in seeking his model, his search was still unrewarded. How many miles he had trudged through the slums of London it is impossible to say, but there had been enough of them to make him wish heartily that the proprietors of Sankey's Sauce had offered their commission to somebody other than himself.

Mr. Brendon had made all other possible models impossible. Every face which Mendoza had encountered since his meeting with the boy in Lincoln's Inn Fields had failed to satisfy his fastidious taste, which, having once realized its ideal, was not to be put off with anything less perfect. Comparison had invariably proved fatal. Not one poor hungry devil upon whom Mendoza's eyes had fallen during the past two days had seemed other than commonplace. And Mendoza was quite prepared to abandon his project (and if necessary his two hundred guineas) rather than fit with a commonplace set of features the starving man of his picture-story. The great artist cannot come to terms with himself.

Yet Mendoza ached and burned to achieve his picture-story. There was nothing else in all the wide world that he wanted to do. It was in him, and until it should be out of him he could know no rest, find no savour in life.

And until he should be suited with a model, achievement was impossible.

Almost anybody else would have invented a reasonably adequate starving man, inked in the pencil drawing, and dispatched it to the makers of Sankey's Sauce. Not Mendoza. He had conceived the idea of contrasting realism with broad farce, and if he could not get his realism, he might not have anything at all.

And so it was in an evil temper that he returned to his studio about seven o'clock on his third day's search.

"Curse that boy!" he said, as he crawled up his stairs—for he was excessively tired. "Who is he to stand between the world and a masterpiece? Who is he to deny a Mendoza the right to earn two hundred guineas? A stage-struck fool! A tuppenny mime, whom no one will pay half a crown a week for carrying a banner! Why should he have been given the only face in all London that appears to fit my conception? Or if that was not to be avoided, why must he be endowed with a pride so stubborn and unusual? It is an atrocious combination. Why couldn't that father of his have been carried off by apoplexy at the conclusion of their quarrel? Then I could have had the son's face for the asking. But no! The old man must needs continue to cumber the earth with his unnecessary presence, and in consequence here am I at a standstill. Oh! why didn't I take to the drapery trade as a boy? Drapers never meet with such disasters. At the very worst of it, they can only go bankrupt. And why did I need to be such a sentimental fool as to give the fellow all that money? Nobody ever gave me five pounds when I was going about on my uppers."

Here he opened the door of his flat.

His man Anfitrion came to meet him.

"There is a young man waiting to see Your Mercy," said Anfitrion. "He has been here since five. He says that his business

cannot be postponed. He is evidently destitute and he looks very ill. But he does not seem to be a beggar, for I offered him food—the poor devil!—and he would have none of it. Indeed, he swore at me when I pressed him. I have put him in the lumber-room, where he has fallen asleep."

Mendoza's eyes lit up. "Ah!" he said. "Ah! let's have a look at him."

They went together to the lumber-room. Mendoza opened the door and peeped in.

Seated on the floor against a stack of frames and canvases, his mouth open and his head fallen back, snoring heavily, white as paper, clad in the scanty clothes of two days before, Mr. Eric Brendon slept the sleep of the utterly exhausted.

Mendoza took three steps forward and shook his visitor gently by the shoulder. The boy opened his eyes, stared stupidly at the artist for a moment, and at last arrived at consciousness of his surroundings.

"Hallo!" he said, "here you are, then."

"Yes," said Mendoza; "get up and come into the studio."

Brendon got up slowly on to his knees; then on to his feet. Then he swayed, and would have fallen had Mendoza not caught his arm. He steadied himself and passed a hand across his eyes

"It's all right," he said, "I was just a bit dizzy. It's gone now."

Mendoza put an arm round him. "Come on," he said. "Can you walk?"

"Oh, yes, I can walk. If you don't mind lending an arm."

"Anfitrion!" said Mendoza.

Together they got the boy into the studio and put him in a long chair.

"Now," said Mendoza, "lie you still while my man gets you some soup. He won't be a minute."

Anfitrion glided out of the room.

"Soup?" Brendon whispered. "Not for me. Not yet. After you've drawn me—yes. Not till then. No!"

"Nonsense," said Mendoza, "you'll do as you're told." In spite of himself his eyes gloated upon the fellow as they noted the excellent emaciation of his face, the admirable sunkenness of his eyes. He was better, if possible, than he had been two days earlier.

"But," he went on, "what the devil do you mean by getting yourself in this state? Did you lose that money I gave you, then?"

Brendon shook his head. "No," he said; "here it is," and he thrust a skinny hand inside his jacket and pulled out Mendoza's five-pound note.

Mendoza glared at the thing. "You fool!" he said. "What do you mean by it? I didn't give you that to keep in your pocket."

"I know you didn't. You gave it me to eat. Well, you see, I didn't eat it. I haven't eaten since that night. I guess I ought to be fit for you to draw now, eh? You were pretty good to me, and I——"

"*Dios!*" cried Mendoza, "you did that!"

"I wouldn't have come," Brendon went on, "for a bribe of fifty pounds, but there was no standing up against this fiver of yours. It was harder to go hungry with it in my pocket than when I'd nothing, but it had to be done. Since you wanted my mug to draw you had to have it. So here it is. I got your address in the telephone book—and my old father can gloat himself blind, and be hanged to him!"

Anfitrion entered, bearing a bowl that steamed.

"Please send that chap away," whispered Brendon. "I can't stand the sight of his soup. Send him away and get busy. I'm pretty far through and I want to have this job *done*."

"Two days!" said Mendoza. "Two days without a bite, and a five-pound note in his pocket! But it is inconceivable! And for me! But it is epic! Here is a sacrifice that may not be wasted!"

Already his board, with the pencilled picture-story pinned on it, was in his hand, and he had dragged up a stool beside the long chair.

"Now!" he snapped, "give me ten minutes—not more. Sit up. Anfitrion, help him to sit up. Prop him with cushions. Put that soup on the table where he can see it and smell it. And you, Brendon, fix your eyes on that bowl. Do you hear? Snuff up its savour. It's torture, I know; but it's necessary. Raise your chin. Open your mouth a little. So! That's the ticket! Hold that. Hold it, I say! Hold it, damn you! In ten minutes you shall be swallowing that stuff and a lot more. But if you fail me—now——"

V.

SO it came about that Mr. Brendon's father knew himself to be a true prophet, and gloated accordingly.

But Mr. Brendon had, by that time, been for some months a member of the company at the Trafalgar Theatre (thanks to a certain letter, signed Mendoza, which he had presented to Teddy Scarsdale, its popular manager), and since it is also to be recorded that Mr. Brendon, having once got a fair start, rose rapidly to eminence in his profession, I feel sure that nobody need grudge the old gentleman the fleeting satisfaction which he derived daily from a certain advertisement of Sankey's Sauce, until presently it became known to him that his undutiful son was making a capital thing of it on the London stage.

The Loser's End

by Hylton Cleaver

ILLUSTRATED BY CHAS. GRAVE

WITH some men eating is a favourite recreation. Not so with Albert. To Albert meal-time was hell. Never could Albert have been described as a cheerful-looking card, for he was a pugilist, and countless blows in the face had left a look of melancholy stamped like a mask upon the parchment of his skin, but at meal-time he looked absolutely wrapped up in an overwhelming sorrow. And he had good reason to be, for Albert hated vegetables with a consuming passion, and his family were vegetarians.

It was meal-time now, and Albert was done. The prongs of his fork had slipped in his effort to harpoon one last bean upon his plate, and the bean had skidded on to the floor.

"Don't throw your food about," his sister had said. "If you don't want it, there's others as do."

Albert stood up. He looked at his mother and he looked at his sister. They took no notice of him whatever. Finally he turned his eyes and looked at his young lady. No light of understanding came into her eyes at all. He unknotted his muffler from about his neck and settled it anew under the collar of his coat, and finally he turned.

"I'm goin'." His voice had a peculiarly husky tone. "I got to be in the ring in 'arf an hour."

He had reached the door before the conversation at the table so much as wavered in its course, and then as he was passing out a sudden eerie silence fell upon the room, and in that silence his young lady lifted up her voice.

"Albert," said she, "you 'aven't kissed me good-bye."

Albert gazed at her with all the concentrated bitterness of a tormented soul.

"No," he said at last, "I know I 'aven't. I've got my mouth full."

Now, had there been anybody at the table capable of sympathy with Albert, they would have thought that a very witty answer.

THE man that he fought that night held Albert cheaply. He knew, of course, that his fight with Albert was merely a first step up the ladder. Every fellow round about a hundred and fifty pounds who took up boxing to make money at it had to beat Albert for a start; and they always did beat Albert. Albert was a man who made his profit by taking the loser's end of the purse. When a fight had to be arranged with Albert, he used to look up with a melancholy air and say, "What's the loser get?" That was about the only thing that mattered much to Albert. If Albert ever won, people used to think it was a frame-up.

He fought to-night as he always fought. He did not go down until he couldn't help it, and then he went down for good, and they picked him up as if it were all a matter of course, and gave him the loser's end and nodded good night to him; and then they said, "Don't forget next Saturday night," and Albert was alone in a passage.

He went out into the street, and started slowly home along the High Road, but he did not go far. He came to a spot from which one could see across the way the brilliant lights of an arcade, wherein, under the title "Joyland," the business of telling people their weights and showing them Paris life through binoculars was carried on; and then he shyly kicked one foot against the other, and, moving more slowly still, he went across and leaned in a thoughtful attitude against the entrance, and at last he looked up, and lo! the girl who told weights was looking down.

"'Ave you been fighting?"

He jerked his head.

"Did you get beat?"

He admitted it with a nod.

"It seems a shame," said she, "to always get beat. I don't like fellows to fight, myself, but if they must fight, then I like 'em to win."

A shadow of shame passed over Albert's face and was gone.

She came and stood beside him, and a little of that seemed to make all the difference. In less than a minute Albert was unburdening his soul.

"There's something wrong," he was saying, huskily. "I didn't ought to get beat the way I do. I seem to be able to box 'em, but I ain't got no stamina, that's what it is. They wear me down." He gave a sudden tremble of despair. "It's all them bloomin' veg'ables! Before my old man died I used to be able to get a bit o' meat, in secret like, before a fight. It's different now. The money won't go round."

He made a pathetic gesture with his hands. Then he noticed that she had turned towards him and was standing with hands upon her hips and head uptilted.

"You ought to get out o' that home. It ain't the sort of place you ought to be in." His home might have been a public-house. He found she was leaning closer to him. She was looking into his eyes now with a kind of challenging stare.

"You ought to make 'em understand that if you got to fight you got to have meat. A little of what you fancy ought to be on your plate o' nights, done round with gravy. I can't seem to follow the way they go on with you. If I were in that 'ouse I'd swing 'em all round on the end of a string, I would, straight. Why don't you wave 'em a glad good-bye and go and live somewhere else?"

"It takes all the money I get to keep the 'ome together," said Albert, in a hollow tone. "I can't give 'em money for grub at 'ome and then go out for a meal in a chop-'ouse."

He began to spread his hands before him hopelessly. "I 'ate all them there vegetables like I 'ate rats, but if I tell 'em so they cut up something awful. My old ma, it's a kind of religion with 'er—and there's my young lady."

The girl turned sharply towards him. "You got a young lady?"

He jerked his head. It was a difficult thing to explain. Albert's young lady had grown upon him. He was not at all sure when he had first begun to notice her, or when he had come to understand that he and she were walking out. It all seemed part of the constitution of his home, a combine of his women-folk against him. He wanted to point this out to the girl beside him, but he did not know how to begin. He felt that a fellow who had a young lady and did not know why he had would seem to anyone who did not understand the way of his life an unusual sort of idiot.

"You got a young lady," said the girl, in a slow, small voice, "and she never sees that you have what you want to eat? Does *she* eat vegetables?"

He nodded mournfully.

"Never a bit of 'addock, or nothing?"

"She goes round with an orphanage-box, collecting," said Albert, quite inconsequently.

"Collecting? What for?"

"For 'erself," said Albert. "She gets a bit, too."

He paused. There seemed very little else to say. He had unburdened his soul and he felt better. But he did not feel altogether easy in his mind about his own young lady. At last he heaved a sigh.

"I'll be gettin' along," said he. He nodded his head. He was gone.

The girl turned to a friend and pointed after him.

"He's the only one who brings home anything regular," said she. "He keeps his mother and his sister, and he's got a young lady what goes round with a box. A fellow like that ought to be a kind of domestic pet in a 'ouse. They never so much as give him a bit of meat for his supper." Her voice began to tremble with indignation. "Never so much as a bit of 'addock for his tea."

There was a moment's silence. Her friend had been looking at her with intense suspicion, and now she drew back with a giggle, and gave her a sudden graceful push on to the kerb.

"Oh, go on, Alice!" said she. "You *are* all right."

The days that followed were, for Albert, full of vexation. Life was an everlasting struggle between his patience and his hunger. There came one day when he pushed his plate away from him in a kind of dull despair.

He said, "I can't eat it. Saturday night I've got to fight Bob Hudson, and I got to be strong. If you want the money to live with, gimme something to eat."

It was not a threat; it was something of an appeal. He looked from one to the other of them patiently, and he saw them sit back in turn and tighten their lips, and finally look around as if in doubt as to who should speak first; and then his sister made a gesticulation towards him across the table.

"Something to *eat?*" she said. She looked half paralyzed with astonishment. "Something to *eat?* What's good enough for us is good enough for you, isn't it? What d'you mean—something to eat?"

"I want a bit of flesh and blood," barked Albert.

There was a moment's absolute silence, and at last there sounded upon the stillness of the room a shrill sound of lament.

"'E's goin' to do a murder, that's what 'e means! 'E's goin' to do a murder!"

It was the voice of his mother. She was looking at him wanly, her mouth a little

agape, just as though he had knocked all the breath out of her body and had left her dizzy. His sister waved at him with nasty witch-like hands.

"Look what you've done to mother! She's going to cry! Look what you've been and done. What d'you mean, I'd like to know? Flesh and blood!"

"I want it to eat," said Albert, bitterly, "not to 'andle. I want to be able to fight to win. My blood's all turnin' to water. I don't seem to 'ave no strength. I'm getting old. It's because o' them bloomin' vegetables. I 'ate 'em. Slow poison they are."

He pushed his plate farther away still, with a fierce, defiant gesture. He caught his young lady's eye. Her hair was dotted with curling pins and drawn back flatly across her narrow head. He wanted to say, "Why don't you do your 'air fuzzy?" But his young lady got in first. She said:—

"Don't take no notice of 'im, ma. Just go on eatin'. Don't take no notice of 'im."

Albert stood up.

"Drivin' the van," said he, "brings in just thirty bob a week. I got to fight, or we all goes under. If you don't want to go under, 'elp me to fight. For the love of Gawd, gimme somethin' good to eat."

There was a sudden yelp like the cry of a frightened puppy. Albert lifted his head. His mother had clapped her hands to her heart and was bursting into tears, and his sister was wrapping long thin arms excitedly about her and bobbing her up and down on her chair. His young lady turned and faced him.

"You wicked man," said she, "look what you've done! Oh, you wicked, wicked man, look what you've been and done to ma!"

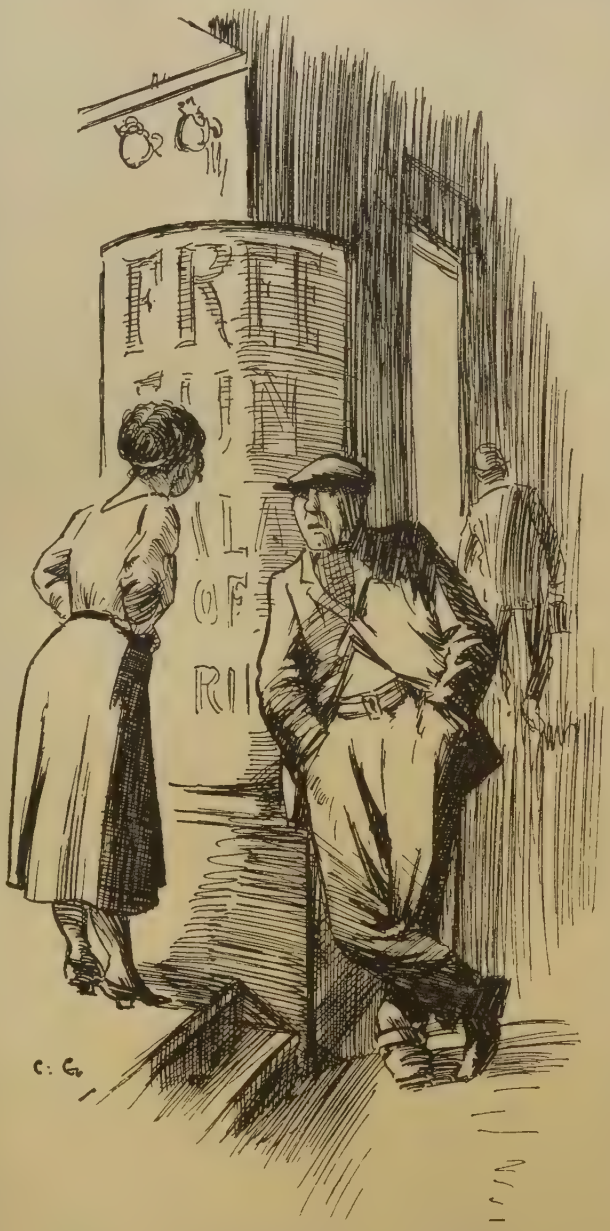
There was sudden unreasonable commotion. In the midst of it Albert turned and went, and all the time he was trying impatiently to find his cap there fell upon his ears a sobbing and moaning like the rise and fall of the wind across the waste.

It was awful; indeed, when the morning came and breakfast was on the table, it seemed to Albert better, whatever happened, to eat what was on his plate.

At the end of the week he fought, and was beaten again. This time he meant to go resolutely home. He passed the arcade with a steady tread and his eyes averted, but only to meet defeat. Alice came out of a shop with a handful of change jingling in her hand, and turned and waited for him. So he stopped, and they looked at one another.

"Did you get beat?"

He admitted it miserably, and he saw her purse her lips and begin to nod her head, but her eyes were set half-absently towards a distant omnibus.



"'I don't like fellows to fight,' said the girl, 'but if they must fight, then I like 'em to win.'"

"You used to win once, didn't you?"

"I could win now if I were strong enough." He began to explain anew. "There was one young fellow who didn't know if he could beat me or not, and they wanted me to lay down to 'im." He lifted his hand and made a sweeping gesture, as if to banish temptation from his side.

"I says, 'No, I fight to win. It ain't too easy for me to get fights nowadays,' I says, 'but I gets 'em because I fights square.' So," he added, with a patient sort of sniff, "the fight was off. They wouldn't risk it. He fought another fellow instead—a proper old 'un. 'E beat 'im all right. And now that young fellow's doin' well. 'E's climbed right up and 'is money's good. But 'e's never fought me yet, and I've a kind of idea 'e doesn't want to. I've a notion 'e's a boy I might be able to beat. 'E's just the kind I like. Fights open, 'e does. 'Its 'ard, but fights open."

He braced his shoulders abruptly. "I wanted to tell you that," said he, "because they've fixed us up at last. We go ten rounds on Monday week, 'im and me. And if I could beat 'im now after 'e's beaten all the others, I'd sort o' wipe out a lot of what's been 'appening. It might be a kind of second lease o' life to me." He stopped. "I don't know what'll 'appen," he added. "I got a bit of a cold——"

The girl was looking up at him, and he suddenly caught her eye. She was looking at him in a very peculiar sort of way. It struck him that it was a kind of soft look. After a while she said, "I say—if you're a bit lonely—you ain't got much in common with them there—I'm a bit lonely too. What about it one night? Couldn't we go to the pictures, eh?"

He looked at her quaintly, a little like a parrot.

"I got a young lady," he said, at last.

"There wouldn't be no 'arm."

He didn't answer.

"I get off Tuesdays," Alice told him, after a moment.

Albert began to totter on the brink. All that she had said was true. There was a little time of waiting. "There wouldn't be no 'arm, would there?" he said at last. "No, I'm blowed if there would! Say Tuesday."

HE did not see Alice at first, because she was looking like a chrysalis. Indeed, it was only when his eyes had found their way all the way up a vast red overcoat that covered her from her toes to the tip of her nose that he saw her blue eyes looking at him pertly over the top of her turned-up collar. And then he smiled at her.

"I want to go home a minute," she said. "There's something I've forgotten. You don't mind coming along? It ain't very far."

He went obediently, with his hands in his pockets, and an occasional rasping cough; and once she looked up at him, and thought he looked drawn with hunger. One might have supposed then that she stepped out a little quicker, until at the gate of a small house in a dark, deserted road she stopped and looked at him.

"Come in and wait. I may be a minute or two. Don't stand about 'ere. You got a cold." She paused. "I got a room here."

For the space of a minute they looked one at the other, and then she made a gesture of resolution.

"Oh, I know it ain't a respectable thing to do. That don't matter. Nobody minds 'ere. I want you to come in. Come on, Albert."

Albert followed her faithfully up the staircase and they came to a third-floor room. She opened the door and turned on the gas, and then she took off her hat and coat, patted her hair once with her hand, and turned to look at him.

Albert was standing upon the threshold of the room and looking positively stricken. His arms were hanging limply by his side, his lower jaw had dropped. There in the centre of the room he beheld a table, and the table was set with a cloth. It bore a bottle of beer. It bore cheese and pickles. It bore a great new crusty loaf of bread.

He turned like a man who feels himself going blind, and stared perplexedly into a corner of the room, where Alice had moved to an oil-stove and was bending over a frying-pan. He saw her slap something red and juicy into that pan. He suddenly caught a sniff of onions. She had secured a fork, and she was poking and prodding with it busily.

He stood there trying with all his might to speak. Once he opened his mouth and closed it again. At last he spoke, and his husky voice was broken. He said, "A bit o' steak—and onions!"

He made no movement at all. He just stood there stiffly, but it seemed to Albert as if the walls of the room were closing in about him. He was as a little child. She took him with a quick, capable hand and set him down, and coming very close beside him she began to lift the contents of the frying-pan on to his plate without a word, and then she poured the gravy round it, and gave him a pat on the back, and said, "I want you to eat it while it's 'ot."

She was standing very still behind him, and at last something wet dropped from her cheek and fell upon her hand.

He made no move. He sat there woodenly with his two hands gripping one at the other

upon his lap. She took off his cap and put it aside upon a chair. Then out of the corner of his eye he saw her cutting bread. She was even bringing potatoes, but he could not begin. He heard her say, almost pleadingly, "Stick your fork in it, Albert."

At last something seemed to break inside him, and he got up with a start and began to undo his muffler. He meant real business. There was one more pause. Then he had given a sort of broken grunt and had fallen to, and now that the spell was broken he ate with a kind of savagery. Only sometimes did he remember that she was there, and at such times he looked up and swallowed once or twice, and said at last:—

"You 'ave some. Go on, Alice!"

She smiled at him. It was great.

Lastly, he stood up and wiped his mouth, then turned and faced her, and, now that he could properly control his thoughts, he looked suddenly wooden again.

"I didn't ought to 'ave 'ad it," he said. "It was your supper. Now I've ate it."

"It was yours. I meant it for you."

"You can't afford to give me meat," he said. "I didn't ought to have——".

"It's a kind of investment," she explained. "I've got the money all right, and I'm putting it into something good. I'm putting it into you. I want you to win—on Tuesday. It may mean a lot you don't think about. But you'll 'ave to trust a woman. I don't like a fellow to fight, but if 'e must fight I like 'im to win. That's what it is."

He looked at her steadily.

"Every evening till Tuesday," said she, "I want you to come in 'ere and 'ave a bit o' supper along o' me. I ain't doin' it all for nothing. It's just a kind of investment."

Albert would have pleaded with her, but she interrupted.

"I'll be paid back. You ar'n't goin' to take my money. Don't worry. I'll be paid back."

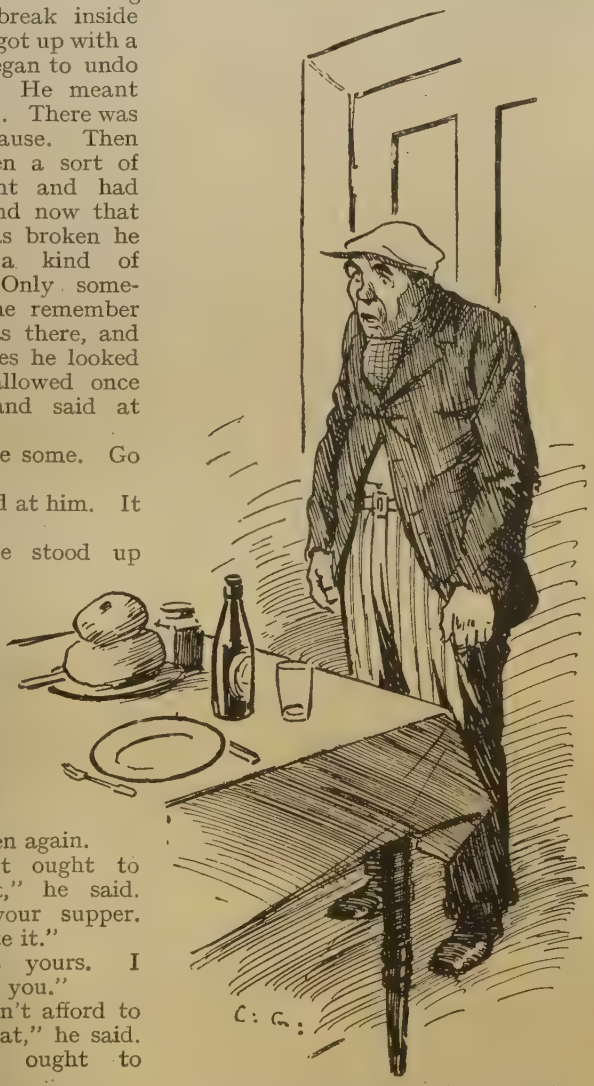
She came a little closer and laid her hands upon his shoulder.

"I want you to beat him, Albert. I want you to win."

He took a quick step forward and made as if to clutch her. He said, "Alice!"

She drew back.

"Don't!" she said. "I wouldn't—not yet, anyway."



"At last he spoke, and his husky voice was broken. 'A bit o' steak —and onions!'"

ALBERT came to be led by the hand, and it was a week of wonder. For seven consecutive days Alice primed him with strong meats for his fight, and every evening when they had done she said, "It's just a kind of investment. If you only beat 'im, Albert, it'll be like putting money into an automatic machine and making the bell ring."

He used to look up at her sideways with sudden gravity, and she saw that he understood.

So came the last night, and when the plates had been cleared away she went with him down the stairway and through the chill darkness of the hall to the door. To-morrow his chance was to come. He jerked his head as he said good-bye, then he left her side and started towards the gate, and there outside he saw something barring his way—shadows that he seemed to recognize, tangible ghosts. They moved when they saw him and seemed to draw closer together, and then they came through the gate and started up the steps, and he stopped and watched them bitterly. It had come. They were his womenfolk. He felt his sinews tightening

within him as if in some foreboding. That moment his sister moved out and halted, and flung out her hand towards him like somebody on a melodramatic poster. The girl with the narrow head, his own young lady, began to hiss abuse at him from between clenched teeth. They were closing in. He turned, and Alice stood calmly in the doorway, watching them as they came. They swept round her in a semicircle and began to threaten. Then they were laying hands upon her. He saw his mother begin to flap her arms like a penguin, while his sister commenced to shake Alice by the shoulder. That was enough. He was in amongst them with a stride and had begun to force them back. He tried with all his might to close their mouths, but he could not quite manage it. As he struggled with them he caught cruel snatches of venom.

"We know—we've 'eard the talk—now we've followed 'im 'ere. A thing like you—any fellow's girl for the price of a pair of stockings! I'll get you turned out of 'ere this night, that I will!—out 'ere into the streets where you belong!"

"I'm 'is young lady," another voice was proclaiming. "You'd take a man from me, would you?—a painted thing like you, out of a arcade!"

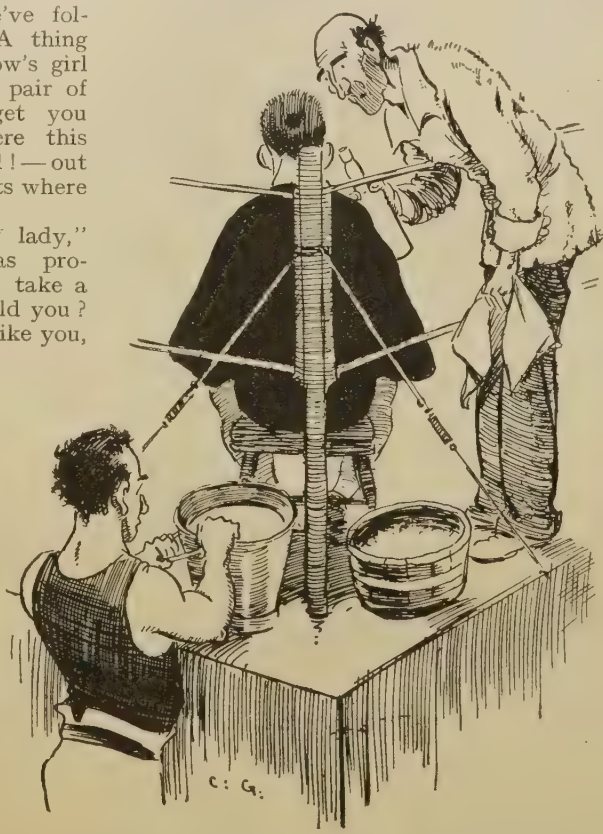
He had forced them back to the gate and he was threatening them wildly. It was no use. They were shouting out her name.

"Alice York—that's who you are. Alice York. We know you."

They were clawing at him in despair. He only once turned to look. Alice was standing in the doorway, her white blouse strangely still, her pale face set and deliberate in the faint light of the hall. She had never moved. As he looked back she waved her hand to him once. He would not see her again until he had fought Young Marshall. He saw her wave, that was all. Then he was hemmed in by his womenfolk. But he had understood. He was out in the street now, and he faced them like a man who means to take revenge.

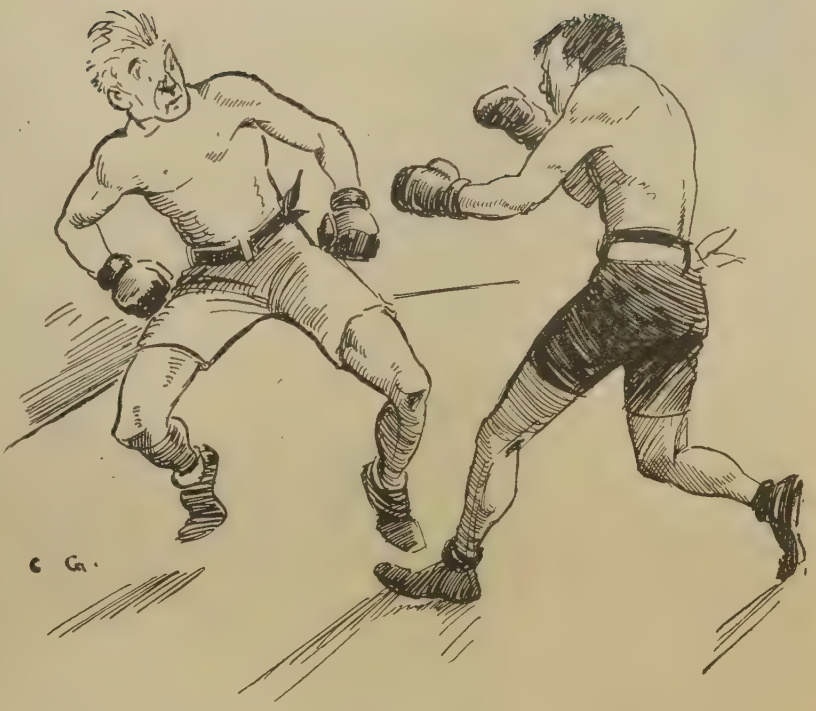
"No more," he said. "No more. I warn you. I'll choke you—dead!"

NEVER before had Albert worried so. He sat in his corner with his gloved hands resting upon his lap and his drawn face turned with a kind of patient watchfulness towards the referee. Once he looked towards Young Marshall, who had scored eleven consecutive victories in ten-round fights. Once he licked his lips. A lean man in a rat-bitten sweater tendered a bottle towards him, but Albert shook his head. Instead he beat a little tattoo upon his knees with his gloves and began to tap his feet upon the boards of the ring; and then at last he looked up once again and saw that they were ready. The time-keeper had his hand upraised and his head bent over his watch. The lean man put down his bottle and loosened Albert's cloak. Then it was time and Albert stood up.



"Albert sat in his corner and a lean man tendered a bottle towards him, but he shook his head."

In a bound Young Marshall was across the ring and had taken his hand; before he was properly shaped the fight had begun and blows were landing everywhere and stinging Albert to action. The rush of it all took him for a moment unawares. Then, while these hurricane blows were rocking him from side to side, clearness of vision began to come to him, and he started to fight Young Marshall back. He did it classically with nothing but his left, and he did it viciously with all the power he knew, and after a little while the steady punching from the shoulder began to take effect, and



"He sprang round the ring like an excited cat. Albert tried to corner him. It was no use."

Young Marshall went back towards the centre of the ring, dawn into a crouch and making evil faces as he threatened first with his right and then with his left. Finally he sprang in with remarkable swiftness. Albert had covered up his vital spots, and now he dropped his head so that his eyes were looking up from under bending brows, and began to battle with him. Marshall slipped into a clinch, and Albert freed himself without exertion, and put out his left hand with a half-arm jolt into the weak spot just under Marshall's ribs, and Marshall went back and struck a new pose, with lifted eyebrows and the corners of his mouth drawn down, and his gloves alternately slapping his thighs and sparring up to Albert.

He was a man who fought to order. Already he wanted his seconds to tell him what to do. Albert was puzzling him. Here was a man who had that sort of hard-bitten face that never looks hot, whose jolting left hand carried a loaded punch. Then, as he made no definite attack, Albert bestirred himself. Twice he came in and seemed to be feeling for his distance. Twice Marshall moved to avoid a blow, and at last, when he was least expecting it, Albert jumped right in with his left as stiff as a rod and struck him immediately under the nose.

He sprang round the ring like an excited cat. Albert slipped this way and that without undue exertion and tried to corner him. It was no use. Marshall was too fantastic. Then, as he dropped his hands just for a moment Marshall leapt upon him and was through his guard; four, five, six blows rattled his jaw; his head rocked dizzily from side to side before the onslaught. The bell rang. He was saved.

Then Young Marshall had his instructions. From that time on he never let up. He was fit, and he set his own pace. He was all round Albert and in and out, and his blows met Albert's body with a zip that was full of life. For a little while Albert fought well. He never wavered. He stood up patiently to the storm, and every time Marshall came in anew his left went out and his right came up to guard; sometimes he scored. But he began in a little while to see that he was losing ground. He was making no kind of impression at all. His way of fighting was merely a sturdy self-defence. Marshall had speed and he had all kinds of enthusiasm. He must warm to his work.

Whenever he could he increased his speed. He started to cross with his right as Marshall jumped in. He found himself once against the ropes, and for half a minute he joined in recklessly and gave punch for punch with either hand. He saw blood coming from Marshall's mouth, and it seemed to encourage him. He kept the same old style, but he sparred with greater speed between the rallies. He began to lead tentatively. Marshall had rather a longer reach, and it was troublesome, but he tried not to notice it; his heart was higher than ever before. He knew this because he was beginning to enjoy the fight. There was a difference. Always before he had fought when he was hungry.

Once, in an interval between the rounds, he remembered how he was primed with strong meat, and it gave him tremendous confidence. It was the idea that he had not been trained on vegetables that mattered. He had something up his sleeve. Every round now he was growing stronger, instead of weaker.

He began now to set his teeth. The old look of patient gloom began to leave his countenance. His face changed into that of a dour, determined fighter. His eyes grew bright. It was not now only a matter of fighting Marshall back. He was setting his own pace. He was moving after that evil young man wherever he went, and plugging in his left without cessation.

Marshall dodged and danced and made grimaces, but Albert was the man who got there. He was wiping out the points that Marshall had scored in the early rounds, and he was coming out on top. He began to use more of his right, for he found that Marshall left his chin open every time he jumped. He quickened up his left and feinted more cleverly with his leads.

Gradually he began to force Young Marshall into a desperate fight. He would not let him get away. He moved this way and that across his front and kept on smiting. When Marshall ducked he straightened him with an upper-cut. When he fell into a clinch, Albert got his own gloves inside and dug him violently in the ribs with either hand until he broke, and Marshall grew angry. His seconds were scolding him unfeelingly between the rounds; they were jeering at his style. They said he was being beaten by some old apple-woman. That was the way they got the best out of him. The eighth round came, and he chose that to show his worth.

"I'll set about 'im 'ere and now," he announced between his broken teeth. "This'll be the one where he stretches out. You want to watch this."

He went in with a perfectly villainous crouch and his eyes agleam, and Albert saw him baring his teeth. He got ready. Then they had clashed and Albert was praying for strength. He met him with head down, his shoulders curved, and he struck out with all his might in self-defence.

Marshall was too alive. It was the best sort of all-round exhibition Marshall knew how to give, and Albert began to weaken. It seemed that his gloves were growing heavy. He didn't seem able to see so well. It was hard to keep his balance. He had lost his speed. Once a blow caught him under the heart and he gave a sob. He was bleeding more than he knew; his breath was coming in jerks; he kept on telling himself it was the eighth round now; only two more to go. If he could last it out, he might possibly win on points.

Then Marshall found his real opening, and his right came over with a determined thump and sent Albert toppling sideways. There was a gradual clamour rising all round the ring; he had heard occasional bursts of applause before, but now people would simply not keep quiet. He heard them, and knew that it meant they thought he was going out. He fell on to his knees and slithered on to his face. He heard the referee telling Marshall to stand right back.

And whilst he lay sobbing for breath he seemed to remember by degrees all those delectable slabs of meat that had lain in the frying-pan and sizzled, and he knew that he had had all those steaks to eat and that they must have done him good. He tried to say to himself, "I can't be done. I'm not what I used to be. I'm full of meat." Then with a sort of set despair he got to his feet and looked slowly round for Marshall.

Marshall was shaping into a new sort of pose and stretching out his left hand, as though to measure the distance that he had to strike, and now as he saw him move Albert grew furiously angry. He summoned from every sinew in his frame all the atoms of strength that vegetables had dissipated, and he got them together into his right arm, and stood ready. Marshall came in with a pretty step-dance, feinted, and let go, and, timing things to perfection, Albert flung out his great blow at the selfsame moment. It was all just a question of timing, and Albert won by the fraction of difference in his speed. His blow got home with a crack as it swerved up under Young Marshall's chin, and Marshall's own blow finished in mid-air. The house rose in an uproar, and Marshall stayed for one moment stiffly upon his heels, then fell like a log right on to the back of his head and never moved.

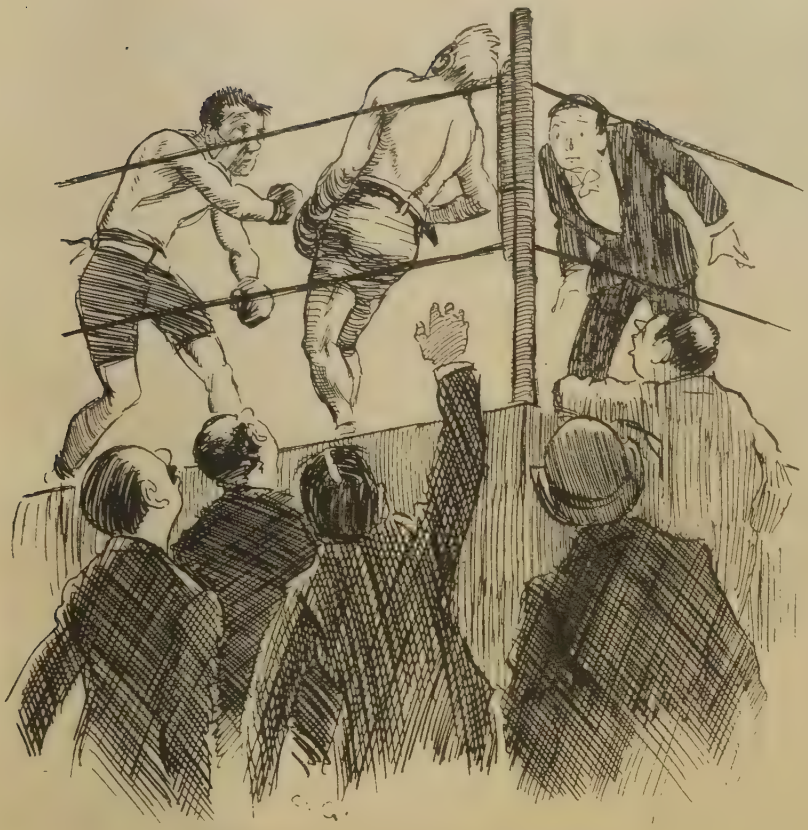
Albert drew back towards the ropes in a dazed, peculiar delight. His eyes were glazed and he could not properly see; but he could hear the noise, and after a little while a cloak fell round his shoulders. The lean man in the rat-bitten sweater clasped an arm round his waist.

"So 'elp me, Albert, you've beat 'im proper! Strike me pink, if you ain't!"

Albert looked at him quaintly. He said:—

"He's out, is 'e?" almost as if he didn't understand. But he wasn't a bit surprised. He looked, if anything, just as though he had done it deliberately. That was what puzzled people most.

HE came to the door of his house with Alice, and he turned the handle and opened it. There was a queer, forbidding hush along the dingy passage, and



"Albert's blow got home with a crack."

he led the way as if his own footfall would make him jump; but Alice was beside him, and they came to the parlour door and opened that.

Albert's womenfolk sat there all round the table just like three witches, and Alice went in and stood by Albert's side before they looked up and noticed it. So there was one brief moment of most utter silence, and then a stir.

Albert's sister moved first. She got up and came towards them with a look of business, and Albert thrust out his hand and toppled her back; then he glanced once at Alice, and Alice lifted her chin a little and spoke.

"I've something to say. You've made your own man's life a misery, and he's one of the best who ever stepped. All this week he's been havin' supper with me, and he's had meat and a glass of beer. To-night he's won a fight, and if I know anything about it he won't be getting the loser's end of the purse much more. The price of his hire's gone up, and it won't be yours to share. I'm taking 'im out of this; me and Albert's going to get married."

Albert's mother threw up her hands and began to slide under the table with a face like an underdone puff. Nobody moved towards her.

Alice held them with eyes like steel, and she also held Albert's arm.

"I'm taking care of Albert after this," said she. "I thought you'd like to know. You'll need to look after yourselves. Women like you don't want supporting. You only want holding under. I've always had to work and I'm going to go on working. Albert ain't going to keep me in luxury. I'll be doing my bit. It's time you worked as well."

She turned to Albert's sister.

"You can find work," said she, "sticking labels aside of jam-jars." Then she looked scornfully towards Albert's young lady. "You'd better take in washing, my dear." At last she moved to Albert's mother, with Albert in close attendance at her side.

"I'm sorry for you," said she. "We ain't goin' to let you starve. Albert and me'll see you 'ave vegetables as long as you like 'em on the business end of a fork, and you'll go on living 'ere. You'll get a bit o' money from us each week to keep you."

She nodded her head abruptly.

"I've *always* 'ad to work," she said again. "I managed to save a bit, and I put that into something good, and I've got it all back with interest."

She looked at each of them in turn with a challenging eye, and then she turned to Albert and offered him a slow, sweet smile.

"Come on, Albert, we'll be getting along. They've been living on the loser's end for all this while, and now that they've got it to keep they don't seem to even know it by sight."

Albert looked at them patiently.

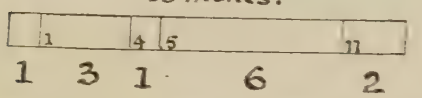
"You want to put something under ma," said he. "She'll bump 'erself something awful in a minute."

PERPLEXITIES.

By HENRY E. DUDENEY.

518.—THE DAMAGED MEASURE.

HERE is a new puzzle that is interesting me very much at the time of writing, and I have not yet got quite to the bottom of the mystery of the general solution. It reminds one, though it is really very different, of the classical problem by Bachet concerning



the weight that was broken in pieces which would then allow of any weight in pounds being determined from one pound up to the total weight of all the pieces. In the present case a man has a yard-stick from which three inches have been broken off, so that it is only 33 inches in length. Some of the graduation marks are also obliterated, so that only eight of these marks are legible; yet he is able to measure any given number of inches from 1 inch up to 33 inches. Where are these marks placed? There are two answers Can you find one of them?

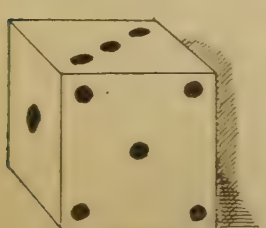
As an example, I give in the illustration the case of a 13-inch rod with four markings. If I want to measure 4 inches, I take 1 and 3; for 8 inches, 6 and 2; for 10 inches, 3, 1, and 6; and so on. Of course, the exact measure must be taken at once on the rod; otherwise the single mark of 1 inch repeated a sufficient number of times would measure any length, which would make the puzzle absurd!

519.—THE FIVE VOWELS.

IN "Letter Pairs" (No. 502) we sought those English words in which every letter used appears in pairs, and we gave STEPPEST and REAPPEAR as eight-letter examples. A correspondent has since sent me ARRAIGNING and INTESTINES, which have ten letters each and therefore beat my record. Now let us see whether the following can be beaten. There is an English word that contains five vowels in succession. What is it? All the vowels are together, with no consonant between, but, of course, the vowels are not all different.

520.—THE TWENTY-FIVE-UP PUZZLE.

THIS is a puzzle propounded many years ago by the late Sam Loyd. My readers will find it an attractive investigation, and the conditions are very simple. The puzzle game is played between two persons, with a single die, and the object is to see who can score twenty-five first, or compel his opponent to go beyond that point. The first player starts by calling out any number from 1 to 6. Suppose he commenced by calling 5, the second player then throws the die. Say 3 turns up, as in the illustration: the score adds up 8. The die is no longer thrown now; the element of calculation begins. The first player now rolls the die over, giving it merely a quarter turn, so as to select one of the four sides, i. e. 5, or 4. Suppose he took 6, the score would then be 14. The new player turns up 4, making the score 18; the other player turns up 6, carrying the total to 24, which will win, as his opponent cannot make 25 (the 1 being at the bottom) and is compelled to go beyond that figure. What is the best number to call first, and why is it the best number?



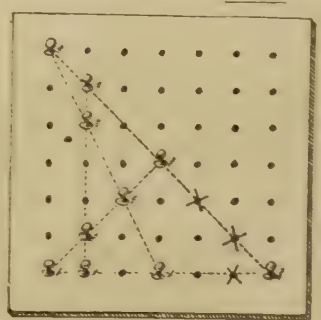
Solutions to Last Month's Puzzles.

513.—IN MEMORIAM.

IF we exchange a White B running on black with a Black B running on white we find the first condition that I gave is fulfilled but the second condition is broken. But if we exchange a White B running on white with a Black B running on black, both conditions are complied with. Now, which White B can we exchange? It cannot be either of those on Q 5, K B 4, or Q 3, because in every case the White K would be left in check, and this would be fatal to any solution in two moves. It cannot be one of those at Q 7 or K 8 because both will be found necessary to a mating solution, since the remaining one would be undefended. It must be the B at Q Kt 5. If we exchange it with the Black B on Q B 4, then the position is possible and 1. B takes B (Kt 3), check, 1. B to B 2; 2. B takes B, mate. It will be found that no other Black B can be exchanged with the White one to give mate in two moves. Of course, an exchange with Black's B at Q Kt 3 would be mate, so it could not be White's turn to play! I have written out a complete game (the absurdity of the play has nothing to do with the question) leading up to the revised position, so the question of possibility is not at all in doubt.

514.—BINKS'S GOOD POINT.

BINKS was good at *Bookkeeping*. Is there any other word in our language having, like this one, three repeated letters in immediate succession?



515.—A PEG PUZZLE.

THE diagram shows how to place the pegs. The three removed from the holes bearing a cross are replaced in the top left-hand corner. The ten pegs now form five rows with four pegs in every row. If you reflect the diagram in a mirror you will get the only other solution.

516.—THE FLOCKS OF SHEEP.

ADAM must have possessed 60 sheep, Ben 50, Claude 40, and Dan 30. If the distributions described had taken place, each brother would have then had 45 sheep.

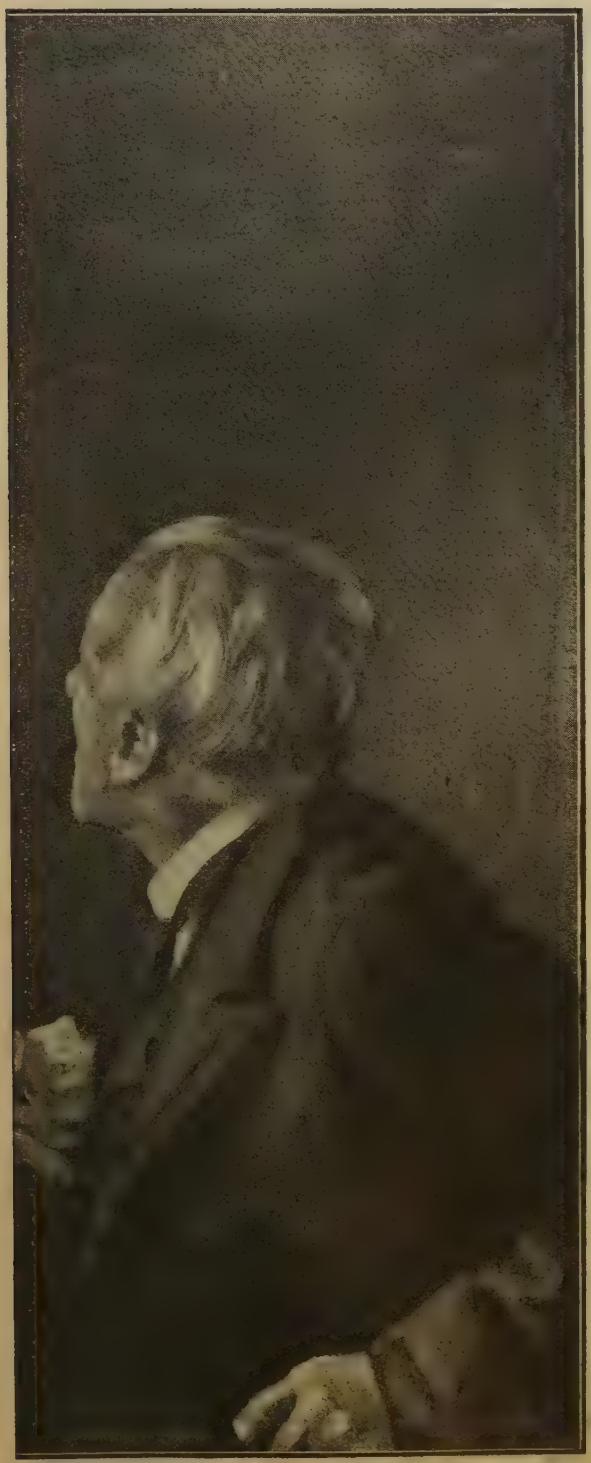
517.—* * * * * LA GUERRE.

THE missing words, in their order, are, Apres, parse, spare, spear, rapes, pears, prase, pares, reaps.

THE
STRAND
MAGAZINE
Oct., 1920.

"STIR ONE MUSCLE, AND I'LL BLOW THE TOP OF YOUR HEAD OFF!"

(*See page 285.*)



A Sequence of Danger

by JAMES BARR ...

Illustrated by A. Gilbert.

UP out of the Underground station and into the warm glow of this beautiful afternoon came Peter Camp, seventy years old and five times over a millionaire. He abandoned his third-class ticket to the collector, took a firmer grip of his stout cane, and off he shuffled to cover on his own feet the half-mile that lay between him and his home.

On the kerb immediately in front of the station's entrance stood two three-quarter-grown youths, one with a bundle of evening newspapers thrust under his arm. The other lounged against a lamp-post, hands in pockets, a half-consumed cigarette dripping from his nether lip, a cloth cap much the worse for wear on his tangled pow; and, all in all, a youth who capably typified the idle poor.

When Peter Camp appeared among the passengers pouring out of the station, the youths recognized him at once. First they stared in contemptuous silence at the sight of a millionaire using the plebeian Underground and his own feet. Next their stare turned to a glare almost purely animal as they swung their faces to follow Peter Camp. The light in their eyes recalled the glow of consuming fire that burns in the eyes of a tiger

when, glaring hunger-stricken between the bars, he beholds a fair-haired, fat, edible little girl toddle past his cage. And when Peter Camp was not more than seven feet away one of the youths exclaimed, perhaps a little louder than he had intended :—

" I'd like to have that old devil's head in a vice. He'd pay up, or crack would go his skull."

" I'd help ya give the vice a extra twist," volunteered the other. " A cool thou would do me down to the ground,"

Peter Camp, stopping short, half turned so that his back was towards the youths and his face to a plate-glass window in which were clearly reflected the bloodthirsty, money-hungry two.

Nothing new to Peter Camp to learn that his millions were envied. That was a commonplace. Indeed, it seemed to him that the multitude, while striving and straining, frothing and fighting, to gather in all the wealth they could manage to lay hands on, still persisted in looking upon it as a personal grievance that another had succeeded at the very game they themselves played with all their might. Long ago this had struck Peter Camp as a feeling unworthy of a progressive people. These two scraggy youths were not angry with him because he represented a system of which they disapproved. Not at all. Were they not as keen at money-making as ever he had been ? Yet hear them voice murderous hopes against him for no other reason than that he had succeeded in doing precisely what they were devoting their abilities in striving to do !

The millionaire glanced at his watch, a cheap one on a cheap chain. There was still time to drop into his bank before it closed. To get to the bank it was necessary to repass the paperseller and his pal.

Peter Camp shot a searching glance at the two. Quite unabashed, they glared back at him. And just as their glances separated the youth of the papers croaked :—

" Crack-crack ! "

The other in a hoarse undertone requested :—

" Another turn, Teddy."

" Crack-crack ! " repeated Teddy.

" That crack-crack alludes to my skull," said Peter Camp, grinning a savage grin as he hobbled away.

Entering the bank the millionaire bent over the counter and asked of the paying clerk :—

" Can you have five thousand pounds in one-pound notes for me before closing time to-morrow ? "

" Certainly, Mr. Camp."

" Then I'll look in for them at three o'clock sharp."

Repassing the two youths, there again sounded the " Crack-crack ! " from the paper-seller. The other supplemented one word :—

" Splosh ! "

" That's my brains. I'm sure that splosh is my brains," muttered the millionaire as he hastened home.

ACCORDING to his word, Peter Camp called at the bank next afternoon at three. He brought with him a large suit-case, and into this five thousand one-pound notes were packed. The millionaire would himself have carried the bag to his house had not the bank manager insisted on sending a messenger, and as the millionaire and messenger passed the Underground station Peter Camp was pleased to behold the two lanky youths standing on the self-same spot as yesterday. He observed that his oncoming seemed to be a source of vitriolly amusement to the two. They had found a joke that made a common appeal to their primitive savagery. The millionaire noticed their faces light up, he beheld the tight grin on their lips, he saw, even before he could hear the sound, those lips shape " Crack-crack ! " and " Splosh ! " The two were showing their teeth, and their eyes glowed with predatory fire when he came abreast of them. Suddenly the millionaire stopped, placing his fingers to his forehead as if a puzzling thought had just flashed upon his brain. He glanced at the youths, stood irresolute for a minute or so, then shuffling across the pavement he asked :—

" Would you two young fellows care to do a job for me this evening ? "

The grins fell from their faces. They were alert and eager.

" Certainly, sir. We'll come along now, sir."

" No, no. Not now. I'm not ready for you yet. When do you knock off selling papers ? "

" Any time, sir. There's nothink in selling papers. We're always ready for anythink that brings in somethink."

" Very well. You know my house ? Call at eight o'clock this evening ; eight o'clock sharp. Come to the front door and ring. I'll be about, and let you in."

And off shuffled the millionaire. Not until he was well out of earshot did the one ejaculate, in an absent-minded sort of way, " Crack-crack ! " and the other " Splosh ! "

WHEN the lanky paper-seller and his pal knocked, the door was opened by Peter Camp himself.

" I'm my own butler," said the millionaire in a matter-of-fact tone. " I'm all alone in the house to-night. Come in."

"Would you two young fellows care to do a job for me this evening?"

The two stepped in.

"Follow me, please," requested the millionaire, turning and passing the length of the hall. He opened a door to the right and entered the kitchen, out of which led another passage. Here on a stand stood a candle, and this the millionaire lighted, then he started down a stair. The youths followed, and found themselves in a roomy cellar. Peter Camp, having lighted two gases and blown out the candle, motioned to the far end of a rather long table.

"Sit down," he said.

The young fellows shuffled across to chairs and sat down. The millionaire drew open a drawer in the table and took out two heavy revolvers. Holding them by the muzzle he handed one to each of the youths, who took them amazed.

"Those are yours," said Peter Camp.

Next the millionaire lifted a large suit-case from the floor and placed it upon the table. This with impressive deliberation he opened, and upending it spilt out on the table a huge heap of one-pound notes. He flung a handful of these to the Ishmaelites.

"Cast an eye on those notes," he said, businesslike. "They are genuine. So are these."

He stirred his hand among the heap until it swelled to double its original size. The youths barely glanced at the notes. Their

eyes were fixed in a dazed sort of fascination on their host.

"By the way," said Peter Camp, glancing at the youth nearest him, "by the way, try your revolver. It's loaded. Aim at the corner over there and pull the trigger. No, you do not need to raise the hammer. It's a self-cocking weapon. Just aim and pull."

The youth did as he was bid, and there came an explosion more terrifying than natural because of the confined space. When the din and echoes ceased the millionaire said, still in that matter-of-fact way of his :—

"I've experimented. The sound of that shot seems big to us who are in this solid cellar, but really it does not reach the outside world at all. Not a soul but us three heard that shot."

He turned, and swinging a chair into position sat down, tilted back till his shoulders rested against the wall, shoved his hands deep into his trousers pockets, and hooked his heel over the rung of the chair. Then for a telling space he gazed now at one now at the other of the two youths, who each sat staring back at him, their revolvers lying on the table before them. At length Peter Camp broke a silence which was becoming painful.

"HERE I, old Peter Camp, millionaire and skinflint, sit, as you can see, in your power absolutely. On this table are five thousand pounds in one-pound notes. They are not five-pound Bank of England notes, which might possibly be a little troublesome to break down into small change; they are one-pound notes, which neither raise suspicion nor can be traced. Each of you is possessed of a lethal weapon, a deadly revolver. There is not a soul in this great house but the three of us, neither will there be for at least four hours to come. In four hours from now you can be miles away in the intricate maze of London with a first-class chance of dropping out of sight beyond fear of discovery. Here lies a fortune for the likes of you—five thousand pounds in one-pound notes. Now, what about it?"

The youths sat tongue-tied. They did not allow their eyes to waver for so much as one splinter of a second from the millionaire's eyes.

"I'll explain. Yesterday afternoon I came out of the Underground. As I passed you," he nodded to the nearest youth, "I heard you say how you'd love to have my head in a vice. If such splendid luck ever came your way you'd make me shell out to you untold money. You," he nodded to the other, "announced that a thousand pounds, you called it a 'cool thou,' would satisfy you. You will easily recall your conversation. Afterwards, when I again passed by, you entertained me to the sound of my skull crack-cracking and my brains sploshing. You said 'Crack-crack,' you said 'Splosh.' Here you find yourselves confronted by the blissful situation you conjured up in your imagination. What use are you going to make of it?"

Peter Camp paused, but the listeners uttered no word.

"Does neither of you possess the nerve to give the vice-handle one half-turn?"

Still not a word from the youths. Peter Camp went on.

"Here I sit helplessly in your power. Yesterday afternoon you limited your envy to the sum of one thousand pounds: here lies that sum five times over. I multiplied your one thousand by five to make certain you would act as desperately, as ruthlessly as it is in you to act. I tell you that to get possession of the money lying before your eyes you must transmute threats into deeds. You must kill. Nothing short of murder will do. No one has seen you come in here. I am absolutely alone in this house. There lies the sum of five thousand pounds in serviceable money. Each of you has a revolver. My head is in a vice. You have hold of the handle of the vice. What happens?"

Dead silence.

"Very well. I'll open the interview between you, who have me in your power, and me, a millionaire, whose head is in a vice. You demand five thousand pounds. I say, No. I say I will not pass over to you five thousand pounds, and I ask you to do your worst. Now what are you going to do?"

A long silence.

"Very well. You recognize that I will not give you the five thousand, and you feel that it is better to get a lesser sum, if by taking it you are saved the necessity of committing murder. You reason that rather than be shot I'll hand over a lesser sum. You demand four thousand. Again I say, No. Again I say, Do your worst."

Another minute and nothing said.

"Very well. We pass on. You demand three thousand. I say, No. Do I hear Crack-crack'?"

A pause.

"Two thousand, you say? No, *I* say. What! no Splosh'? Why is the vice not turning? One thousand? No. Five hundred? No."

Peter Camp withdrew his hands from his pockets, stood up, grasped hold of the sides of the table, thrust his lean white head towards the two, his neck stretched forth like a turtle's. He barked :—

"Five shillings under compulsion? Five

shillings to prevent you turning that vice? Five shillings to save my skull going 'Crack-crack' and my brains 'Splosh.' Never! Never! Never! Not—one—farthing."

The millionaire glared at the two, his wizened old face screwed up into a focus-point of defiance. All his being was one hard knot of challenge.

The youths cast not so much as half a glance at the pile of notes lying there on the table top. The revolvers lay untouched within reach of their listless fingers; the lower jaws of the two hung loose, and fear and fascination fought for possession of their eyes.

"Not—one—farthing!" bawled Peter Camp, with emphatic deliberation. 'Now what about it?"

THE Ishmaelites turned to gaze at one another. If either thought to have found strength in the other's presence he was mightily mistaken. Instead each recognized that the other was as unwilling to act, yes, as unable to act, as himself. Each of them simultaneously pushed his revolver farther away from him, and withdrew his hand from the weapon as a visible sign that he dissociated himself from all thought of crime. Peter Camp, millionaire, let go the table and sat down.

'It is as I thought. Neither of you has the mettle in you to be a criminal in act; you are criminals only in fancyings. Now I think that when you weigh matters up you will realize what fatuous mirages fancyings really are. They are nothing but miasma created by wasted thoughts. For two days you have been feeding upon all sorts of delights by fancying you had the skull of the old millionaire, Peter Camp, in a vice. What time, what thought you wasted! Here everything is arranged according to your imaginings: Peter Camp, helpless, five thousand pounds waiting merely to be picked up, and—you profit not one penny piece. Now can you not see the difference between fancy and fact?

"If either of you had the pluck, the bad pluck, mind you, to fulfil your fancyings, the certain result would be to land you on the platform of a scaffold with a rope noosed round your neck. The scaffold is the eminence the fancyings you have indulged in, were they crystallized into deeds, would raise you to in the community. How many pounds have you there lying before you?"

The millionaire nodded to indicate the handful of notes he had tossed over to them. The youths, their fingers trembling, counted.

"Eighteen, sir."

"Very well. That cuts up into nine pounds each. Here's what I'll do. I want to prove to you that nothing counts but deeds. Divide those notes between you. Each of you take nine pounds. Do what you please with four, but put five in the Savings Bank. At the end of every three months bring me your deposit book, and I'll double all you have added to those five pounds. I'll continue to do this as long as I choose, but the chances are I shall cease the moment you draw any money out, unless for a cause I approve. Now let yourselves out. Good night."

Peter Camp, when his two crestfallen but somewhat consoled guests had clattered up the stairs, began slowly, rather gloatingly, to rustle his hands among the heap of one-pound notes, and as he did so he chuckled a sarcastic, self-satisfied chuckle. This chuckle, however, came to a most abrupt full stop. A voice, full of menace and ringing clear as a bell, struck definitely upon his ear.

"Stir one muscle, and I'll blow the top of your head off!"

Peter Camp did not stir one muscle. He froze stiff. He heard footsteps advance, he felt a hand run over him searchingly, he felt the revolver he had hidden in his breast withdrawn.

"I thought as much," said the voice, chuckling much as Camp himself a moment ago had done. "Have you any other weapon secreted about you?'

The millionaire shook his head.

"Right! Now, Mr. Philosopher, let me warn you. If you make one attempt to escape or to raise a row I'll shoot you dead. You quite understand?"

'Quite."

"I am glad you can find tongue. You had those two lads scared cold. You bluffed them clean out of their wits. I enjoyed every word of your bluff."

Peter Camp saw a wiry, determined, grim little man with a narrow mask over his eyes walk to the end of the table where the youths had been sitting and pick up first one revolver, then the other. He broke open the breech of each and spilt the cartridges out into his left palm. As he contemplated these his head nodded wisely.

"As I guessed. No bullets. The report of the shot that young fellow fired did not ring true. Besides, if there had have been a bullet I'd have been laid out. I thought for a moment I was a dead man, for the young spark aimed straight at my chest. I wonder you did not hear me jump. I was hiding in the corner. Your revolver, I take it, contains more serviceable ammunition?"

Breaking it open, cartridges, fully efficient, fell into his palm.

Again the fellow chuckled, his eyes now upon the millionaire.

"That was a mighty knowing harangue you pulled off for the benefit of those two

lads. Shouldn't be a bit surprised if it has done 'em a lot of good; put their feet on the straight and narrow, and all that. Of course you gave them no inkling that your attitude, your calm fortitude in the face of sudden death, was all bluff. Let us be thankful, we who have the interests of morality at heart, that the two are no longer here to see your bluff called. For, Mr. Philosopher, I'm on the point of calling it hard and sure. Sit down."

Peter Camp, who was half out of his chair, sat down.

"You remember what you told 'em? No threats could make you part with so much as one farthing! How a man who has reached your years, and who knows the world as you know it, could bring himself to tell such a thumping lie to two children beats me. It only shows what sinners men grow to be if they are allowed to live long enough."

The fellow himself sat down, placed his forearms along the table, his revolver menacing Peter Camp's chest, and he glared at the millionaire.

"Let me run your proposition the reverse way to the way you ran it a moment ago. Offer me five shillings not to shoot daylight through you? I say, No. Do I hear you say 'Shoot'?"

Peter Camp shook his head.

"You offer five hundred pounds? I say, No. Are you going to tell me to do my worst?"

The millionaire shook his head.

"Not you. Instead, you now offer me two thousand pounds to go away and leave you with a whole skin. I say, No. Am I now asked to commit murder? Recall what you vowed to those two boys. Am I to shoot? Speak up."

The millionaire shook his head.

The burglar grinned.

"I thought not. Do I hear you offer me four thousand pounds not to murder you? Yes? I say, No. I say I'm going to murder you unless I get more than four thousand pounds. Do you refuse to go higher? Do my ears deceive me when I hear you tell me that compulsion cannot compel you to hand over?"

The fellow waggled the muzzle of the revolver up and down, covering the millionaire's head and chest.

"The millionaire glared at the two, his wizened old

"Do I hear you say 'Swing for it'?"

Peter Camp shook his head.

"Ah, me! How thankful we two old men should be that those boys are not present to behold the evaporation of the mirage your eloquence caused them to gaze admiringly upon. But never mind. Let's get on with my little bit of philosophy. Am I right in believing you offer me the whole millionaire, much as the millionaire had glared at the youths.

"Is it not you who have been fancying? You fancied yourself a hero. You fancied you would allow yourself to be shot dead rather than anyone should take by force from you so much as one farthing. On a sudden you find yourself face to face with facts, not fancies. A palpable fact, a mighty

face screwed up into a focus-point of defiance."

five thousand pounds lying there," he nodded to the heap, "the whole five thousand not to kill you?"

"You are right in so believing," admitted the millionaire.

"I fancied as much. My fancyings, you see, are facts. The five thousand is mine. I have possession of what I came here to get. I seldom fail. I learned, never you mind how, that you were drawing out a big sum in notes from your bank. I saw a messenger from the bank carry this suit-case here, and I broke in and secreted myself, resolving to get a firm grip on the money before to-morrow's dawn. You have made my job dead easy."

The burglar got to his feet. He placed his palms on the table and glared at the grim fact—me. Now what do your fancyings amount to? They amount to nothing but breath. For before you stands a man, a burglar, a criminal dyed in the wool, who, sooner than forego one single penny of those five thousand pounds scattered here on the table, would joyfully turn murderer and shoot you as full of holes as a sieve, or alternatively allow himself to be shot to the likeness of a sieve. I would fight to the death. I would kill or be killed."

"Stir one muscle, and I'll blow the top of your head off!"

The identical words he himself had used to the millionaire smote with harsh violence upon the ear of Burglar Jim Stark, and they froze him as solid as they had frozen Peter Camp. The command was not the only

evidence of the presence behind him of someone with a weapon in his hand, for Stark felt the muzzle of a revolver pressing hard against the back of his skull and scoring cruelly into his scalp. A short silence and again the voice :—

"Shove your gun along the table away from you."

With the back of his fingers Burglar Jim Stark flicked the weapon out of his reach.

"Now, hands behind."

Next instant Jim Stark stood with his wrists handcuffed behind him, then out in front of him stepped Detective Barker. Barker had too much consideration for the feelings of a man, even though he well knew that man to be a really dangerous criminal, to allow himself any cheap glory by mention of fighting to the death, killing or being killed, but he could not help a tiny smile from playing round his lips. This Burglar Jim Stark did not fail to notice.

"You took me off my guard," said the burglar, briskly.

"No more than you took Mr. Camp," replied the detective.

"What devil chance brought you here ?" demanded the burglar.

"It was chance, nothing more, nothing less. I caught sight of you following someone. I followed you. I saw you let yourself into this house, and I took the liberty of following your example."

"Trust a 'tec to follow a bad example," growled the fellow.

"I'll continue to live up to the character by following you to the station," retorted Barker.

Peter Camp, millionaire, arose and stood rather unsteadily, his face whiter than ever, for the strain of the last fifteen minutes had been too much for such an old man. He held out a trembling right hand for the detective to take.

"These notes are yours," he said, motioning towards the five thousand, less eighteen, on the table. "Thank Heaven, there's one man among us who does not vapour fancyings ; one man who is ready to carry out his word to the last letter. Thank Heaven, there's one man among us who really holds the cards he says he holds. Thank Heaven, there's one among us who does not need to bluff."

Then the old man hobbled upstairs to his study.

THREE hours later Detective Barker sat meditatively smoking his pipe. By him, reading a newspaper, was his especial chum, Detective Pat Hanrahan. Suddenly Barker broke the silence.

"Pat," he said, in an awed sort of whisper, "Pat, you're an Irishman. Be my Father Confessor."

"I'm listening," said Hanrahan, putting down the newspaper.

"Pat, it may do my nerves good to confess, and my nerves are jumpy to-night. Pat, I did the great fool act of my life this evening. I arrested Stark."

"Stark ? Jim Stark, the burglar ? That rattlesnake ? You arrested him single-handed ? That was no fool act, I'll lay my boots on it !"

"Pat, when I called upon Stark to stand he had his fingers on his gun. You know the deadly fight he put up two years ago when he tore himself away from four policemen ? Teeple's still a cripple from that fight."

"Yes, and two others, Foster and Pitt, have never rightly got over the bullets handed out to them by Stark on that occasion, either."

"Well, Pat, we've been on the look-out for him ever since, as you know, and I arrested him all on my own. He had his fingers on his gun. It lay before him on the table. I called on him to shove the gun out of his reach and to give me his hands behind his back to be handcuffed. He obeyed."

"You never did lack nerve, Barker. Of course you had the drop on him ?"

"That's where the great fool act comes in. As I shoved my revolver against Stark's head and called on him to hands up, at a flash I remembered that my gun was not loaded. I'd been showing it to some boy scouts, and following my rule, I took the precaution of emptying it of cartridges. Then for the first time in my detective career I forgot. I forgot to reload. The cartridges that should have been in my revolver were in my coat pocket. Just as I shoved my gun against Stark and announced I'd blow his head off if he resisted, the knowledge that my weapon was harmless struck me such a blow that I came near to pitching over on my face. If Stark had caught sight of me then I'd be this moment a dead detective."

"The bluff came off ?"

Barker, nodding, withdrew his pipe from his mouth and contemplated it dreamy-eyed.

"Say, Pat," he asked, "has my hair turned white ? No ? Well, it will before to-morrow dawns."

COUNSEL FOR THE PRISONER

by E. T. Raymond

(Author of "Uncensored Celebrities," etc.)

Illustrated by E. T. Reed.

LIKE many other institutions, the Old Bailey has seen a great deal of change during the last twenty years.

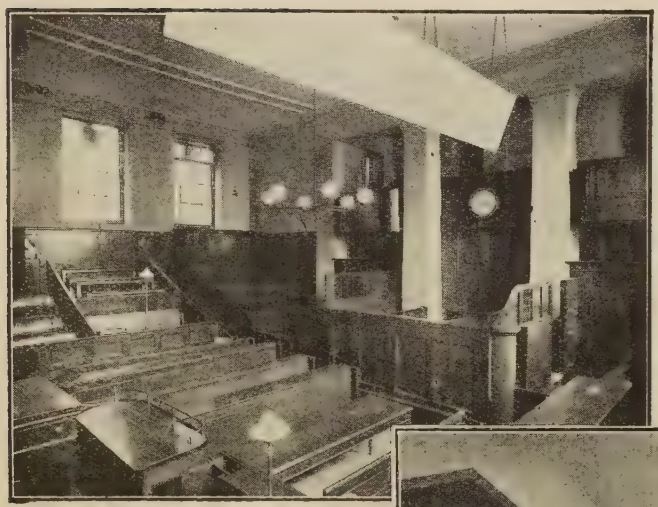
There used to be a grim appropriateness about the chief criminal court of London. It looked its name and its reputation. Approaching it from the north, the first impression was of the gloomy and massive walls of Newgate, festooned in gigantic fetters, dark and minatory, frowning on the busy modern street, reminders of the old stern days when droves of criminals passed through its ponderous gates on their last journey. Architecturally, I have heard, it was an excellent piece of work from every point of view; at any rate, there could hardly be a building more faithfully proclaiming its purpose or setting forth more mercilessly the idea of "All hope abandon, ye who enter here." The famous prison of Venice, reached through the Bridge of Sighs, is festive in comparison.

Passing this gloomy pile, you came to a shabby doorway exhaling that atmosphere of stale breath, heated clothing, and damp umbrellas which is characteristic of all places where British justice is administered. The court in which so many famous criminals have come by their deserts might be described as impressive without dignity. It was commonly designed, commonly furnished, dark, pokey and inconvenient, and so saturated with evil association that one could well imagine the judge taking a specially hot bath when he went home. To the dinginess of the whole one splash of vivid colour gave crude relief—the scarlet of his lordship's robes and the blues and yellows of the nosegays lying before him.

But even flowers at the Old Bailey have sinister associations. They are reminiscent of the days when the deadly "jail fever" used often to rush straight from the gaunt and yellow wretch in the dock to the rosy and portly lawyer on the Bench, so that my lord died even before the law, savagely expeditious as it was in those days, had had time to execute his judgment on the prisoner. As a feeble kind of barrage against such infection, flowers and sweet-smelling herbs were strewn between the Bench and the prisoner at the bar, and the nosegays are the modern representative of this primitive sanitary device.

A horrible place was the Old Bailey as it still existed in the first decade of this century, and its atmosphere of doom, accentuated by the croaking of the old usher, who used to swear the jury as if he were repeating some unholy incantation, must have struck a chill to the heart of the most confident criminal.

To-day all that is changed, and the Old Bailey is spick and span almost to the point of jauntiness. But it is, to a sensitive mind, perhaps even more inhuman than its shabby predecessor; it suggests the widening gulf between those who sin and those who plead and judge. Old Bailey lawyers of the past were often coarse and sometimes brutal, but they were not aloof. They took a certain personal interest in the people they defended; congratulated them in human fashion when they got off, and even wore mourning rings



The Old Bailey as it was.

The Old Bailey to-day.

for them when the jury refused to acquit. To-day the Old Bailey Bar, if not more business-like, is certainly less intimate.

It is less intimate all round. Among the lawyers composing it there is now little of the sense of being a close corporation, little of the rough jollity and "snugness" of the old days. A good many men go eastward after their 'call" because they can generally reckon on some kind of brief at some kind of fee, and there is always the chance of getting into the public eye. But few take to the Old Bailey with the idea of sticking to it. The way of the Judge in "Trial by Jury," by whose efforts

> Many a burglar was restored
> To his friends and his relations,

is not the approved modern path to legal eminence. The day of the great specialized criminal lawyer is gone. At one time the Bench was largely recruited from the ranks of famous advocates at the Central Criminal Court. Without going back to Jeffreys, who rose from the Old Bailey to the Woolsack, we have still living an ex-Chancellor, Lord Halsbury, who was one of a group of brilliant barristers living on criminal briefs. Lord Brampton, as Mr. Henry Hawkins, was chiefly known as a criminal lawyer; and there were others who almost looked on the neighbouring Newgate as a mediæval Baron might have done on his deer park. They were a mighty race, given to florid eloquence and ingenious cavil, terrors to witnesses and even sometimes to judges, and many of them cultivated to the utmost the powers of their leathern lungs.

The late Sir Charles Mathews, one of the most deadly of great Old Bailey counsel, was a delicate little man with a curiously tired voice tending to drop at every tenth word, and it was he who, to a large extent, inaugurated the quieter fashion of to-day. But some of his predecessors to a great extent relied for their verdicts on terrifying loudness of tone; they roared like all the bulls of Bashan. A newly-appointed judge was once startled, during his first Old Bailey sitting, by a dreadful noise. "What's that?" he exclaimed. "Is it thunder?"

"No, m'lud; only Mr. Sleigh making an application in the next court," was the reply.

Montagu Williams was a very typical barrister of the old time; it was his boast that in twenty-four years he had defended more distinguished criminals than any other man; he was "in" the Hatton Garden murder, the Clerkenwell explosions, the case of Mme. Rachel, the Benson turf frauds, and the Penge, Peace, and Lefroy murders. He used to tell many stories of the grim jests played by one counsel on another. Thus Best, who defended the prisoner in the Plaistow Marshes murder, was just rising to give his speech to the jury when he received a large black-edged and black-sealed envelope. When opened it was found to contain black gloves and a hat-band—mourning in advance sent him by Hawkins, who had betted on a conviction. The very chaplains were infected with this ghoulish humour. One, just after adding his "Amen" to the

death sentence, turned to Williams, who had prosecuted, and said, "Hallo, Williams, you've bagged your man!"

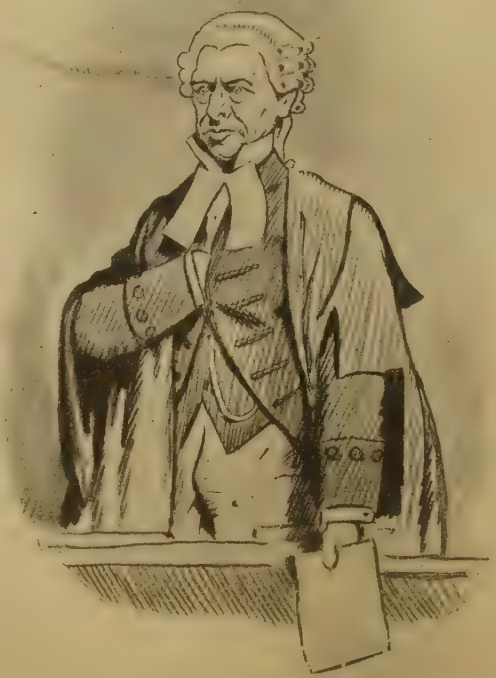
This spirit is quite extinct, but so also is the peculiar glory of the Old Bailey Bar. The latter fact is easily explained. The business of defending criminals is no longer lucrative according to modern standards. A burglar of to-day may be able to afford something more than a burglar of the 'sixties, but not very much; crime, after all, does not permit of syndication beyond a certain extent, and the best-managed thieves' kitchen does not accumulate much in the way of a reserve fund. On the other hand, with the growth of big businesses, there is hardly a limit to be placed on the money that great firms are willing to pay for the best that can be had in the way of legal aid.

Thus the whole outlook of lawyers has changed. In the last half of the nineteenth century it was possible to pick up a very good living at the Old Bailey, and it was not easy to pick up more than a good living at the Law Courts. To-day the prospects of the first career remain much what they were, while famous K.C.'s can get enormous fees from big commercial and society suitors. Sir John Simon was offered as much as seven thousand pounds to appear in a single case.

It is therefore

LORD HALSBURY,

"WHO WAS ONE OF A GROUP OF BRILLIANT BARRISTERS LIVING ON CRIMINAL BRIEFS."



LORD BRAMPTON,

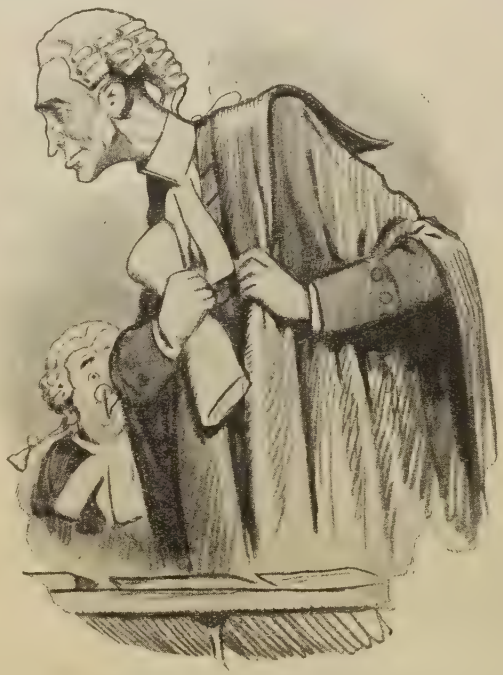
WHO, "AS MR. HENRY HAWKINS, WAS CHIEFLY ... KNOWN AS A CRIMINAL LAWYER."

natural enough that criminal practice has come to be regarded mainly as a stepping-stone to better and to higher things; a reputation made at the Old Bailey is valuable chiefly for what it leads to. Two results follow. The Central Criminal Court has now few particular stars of its own, and the style adopted by beginners is far quieter and more ordinary than was once the case; it is a general purposes style, and not specially designed to mesmerize the common juryman. When the magic of words is badly wanted, and can be paid for at fancy rates, a fashionable K.C. is apt to be imported from outside.

Thus Sir John Simon, whose first beginnings were at the criminal bar, early left burglars for company directors, who could pay very much better. But the Old Bailey has called him back from time to time, both as prosecutor and as counsel for the defence; and in the Malcolm case, in which the plea of the "unwritten law" was raised, he was briefed at enormous cost. The expense of this most costly of counsel generally justifies itself. Sir John Simon is not often heard in a criminal court, and the constant jingle of the guinea—or rather thousand guineas—has so softened his manner that it is often forgotten that he can be, when he likes, a very terrible

cross-examiner; on one occasion he reduced a prisoner to inarticulate sobs. But ordinarily his chief weapon is a deadly suavity, an insinuating and plausible way, like that of the boa-constrictor hypnotizing the rabbit.

Quite different in method is the other great King's Counsel who is occasionally tempted by a huge fee to the Old Bailey. Sir Edward Carson is a terrible prosecutor; he learned his business in Ireland, where legal manners are sterner than here, and, as he long went about in fear of his life from desperadoes, it was natural that he should be bitter when he got one in the dock before him. But his fame as counsel for the defence is hardly less high in the legal profession. "I would rather be defended by Ted Carson when I was wrong than by any other man when I was right," was the opinion of a high authority. At a Bar mess some famous legal men were discussing Sir Edward and his great rival of the moment. The debate was concluded by an admirer thus: "I should be ready to hunt tigers with Carson; I wouldn't hunt cats with the other."



SIR JOHN SIMON.

"HIS CHIEF WEAPON IS A DEADLY SUAVITY, AN INSINUATING AND PLAUSIBLE WAY."

Sir Edward has always carefully preserved his rich brogue, but it is never heard to such advantage as in a Court of Justice, and is especially luscious when he leans forward, with his hungry, hatchet face drawn in every muscle with the kind of excitement one sees on a greyhound straining at the leash, to demolish a hostile witness. The thing has a most curious effect. Here are the very tones of the music-hall Irishman, and the purport is so grim. It is as if you were to hear Mr. George Robey declaiming the Athanasian Creed.

Sir Edward has a trick of repeating the word "any"—which he pronounces "Annie"—with such emphasis that the most good-natured juryman feels that he must convict, or recommend that the chief witness for the prosecution shall be proceeded against for perjury, as the case may be. It is a liberal education for any young barrister who wants to learn the elements of his business to listen to the great counsel laying down the law as to what should happen to Annie man, or for that matter Annie woman, who in Annie circumstances, without Annie justification, or being in Annie fear of Annie serious injury to himself, or Annie one belonging to him, commits Annie violence against, or inflicts Annie injury on, Annie other man. Apart from the constancy of his accent, Sir Edward has the most flexible voice imaginable, and can pass at will from thunder-tones to a not less menacing calm, or from a cynical drawl to a deadly hiss. Once he even burst into tears as the result of his own eloquence.

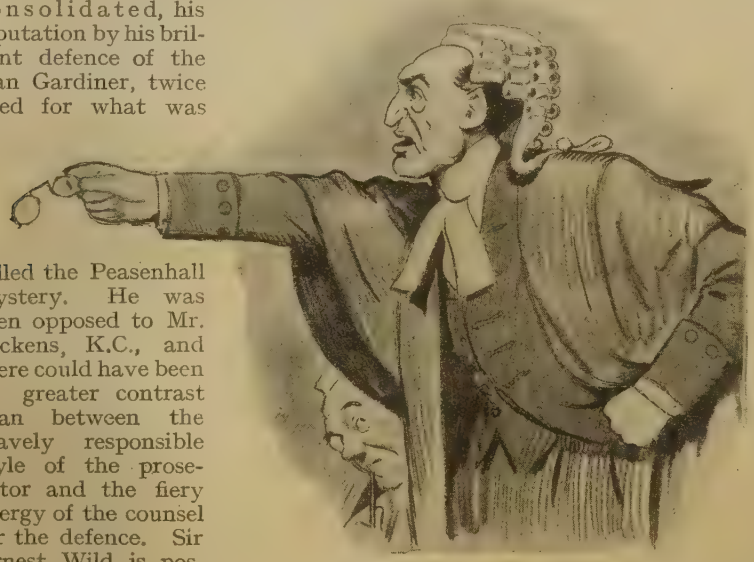
"Tears, idle tears" are not, however, much in his line; and Annie man who provokes them must be prepared to pay Annie sum in reason (or even out of it) for the privilege. Sir Edward once threw back a brief marked five hundred guineas; in two hours it returned to his office marked a thousand; he told his clerk he would not go into court under fifteen hundred. The fifteen hundred came within an hour, and he had to go. If Anniebody is in Annie trouble, and thinks Sir Edward Carson will be sure to get him out, he had better first look into his bank-book and see if he has Annie considerable balance. A few odd guineas will not do.

Neither will they suffice to set in motion that fine piece of forensic machinery known as Sir Edward Marshall Hall, K.C. Of barristers of high note Sir Edward is perhaps the most frequently heard at the Old Bailey, where Mr. Gill, K.C., who sprang into fame as a cross-examiner by standing up to the late Sir Charles Russell and beating him, is now comparatively seldom seen. The Marshall Hall manner is rather old-fashioned; he is the only big man at the Bar who goes in for the florid Buzfuz style—"Chops, gentlemen, and, good heavens, tomato sauce," "designing villainy," "revolting heartlessness," and the rest of it. He works tremen-

dously hard for any interesting murderer whose case he has taken up, and generally attacks the newspapers for having printed, as newspapers will, "column after column—and in every edition, gentlemen," facts which might conceivably be prejudicial to his injured client.

Men of fastidious taste may be moved to a smile occasionally by some blaze of eloquence, but it is the result that counts, and Sir Edward has secured some sensational acquittals. The rather antique expansion of his style might suggest to anybody who read a speech of his in print a somewhat elderly gentleman with forked whiskers; he looks, in fact, almost unnaturally young, and has the fine features of a Greek god. "There's only one thing against Marshall Hall," said a crusty old barrister when he had secured an acquittal in the Camden Town murder trial some years ago; "he's too handsome for a serious profession."

A little reminiscent of Sir Edward is another well-known criminal lawyer—Sir Ernest Wild, who swam into politics last election as a "Hang-the-Kaiser" enthusiast. He made, or rather consolidated, his reputation by his brilliant defence of the man Gardiner, twice tried for what was called the Peasenhall mystery. He was then opposed to Mr. Dickens, K.C., and there could have been no greater contrast than between the gravely responsible style of the prosecutor and the fiery energy of the counsel for the defence. Sir Ernest Wild is possibly not a great lawyer, but it is equally certain that he has many of the qualities of a very great advocate. For a forlorn hope, that may be realized by sheer audacity and pertinacious worrying of witnesses, judge, and jury, he can hardly be beaten.



SIR EDWARD CARSON

"IS A TERRIBLE PROSECUTOR; BUT HIS FAME AS COUNSEL FOR THE DEFENCE IS HARDLY LESS HIGH."

Such are a few of the men who may be a very present help in time of trouble to those who can afford the luxury of fees ranging from the gigantic to the considerable. What of the men who appear for the Crown? The position of prosecutor in this country does not lend itself to the illustration of the more showy order of talent. On the Continent it is the business of the *juge d'instruction* to be immensely impressive and eloquent. He draws up an accusation as readable as a novel, and, having depicted in the most glowing colours the alleged deed of the accused, breaks off to tell the man's story in his own words, telling it so baldly that the jury's inclination is straightway to guillotine him for a blockhead as well as a scoundrel.

But an English prosecutor has to be most scrupulously fair; he has always the judge a little inclined to be against him; and his best weapon is a tongue of ice speaking for a mind of frozen impartiality. The ice may be creamy in texture, like that of Sir Archibald Bodkin, who looks like a churchwarden with some ambitions for the pulpit, and puts the most deadly suggestions in a bland and soothing voice. Or it may be the unadulterated and uncompromising article which Sir Richard Muir produces from his private refrigerator.

Sir Richard is a poor orator, though he handles evidence with great skill. There is no appeal to anything but hard facts, and he goes on, unhasting, unresting, unfeeling, the very personification of an avenging justice, until he has wound the last thread of his web round the doomed man. Then he sits down abruptly with a look to the jury that says, "Well, if you can resist all that you are not fit for the duties of citizenship, and the sooner the silly jury system is abolished the better." In "Jekyll and Hyde" I have always thought the real thrill came in the description of the little man stumping over the fallen child as if he were "some damned Juggernaut." That is the kind of feeling a spectator has in seeing Sir Richard Muir coolly fitting his criminal for a rope. It is all so coldly workmanlike; one feels that the man is merely a fate in wig and gown. And one wonders what it feels like to be the man he is measuring for a rope—especially if he knows quite well he deserves one.

MR. FLINTHEART

by

ROLAND PERTWEE

ILLUSTRATED BY
BALLIOL SALMON

And he who gives a child a home
Builds palaces in kingdom come.
—"*The Everlasting Mercy.*"

AS I have repeatedly assured my sister, my only reason for allowing wounded soldiers the use of my garden was a practical one. The garden, for London, is unusually large, and the only open and shady space within walking or wheeling distance of the hospital. Naturally I gave the fellows tea, and very occasionally yielded to the unspoken solicitations of those who had the taste for a decent cigar. Not being markedly penurious, one could not always ignore the appeal of sundry individual cases, but in this, as I hope in all other affairs, I proved myself discriminate and exacting, personally following the voyage of my subscription to its proper destination. But Stella will insist that I have a big heart as full of soft spots as a Gruyère cheese is full of holes.

I disdain to argue with Stella, or for that matter with any woman, since I belong to the type of individual who is unwilling to take part in an enterprise that offers no inducement in the way of profits. Sometimes, in sheer desperation, I have been obliged to stand up for myself.

"My dear, good girl," I have said a dozen times, "just because I was lucky enough to lose a foot in the retreat from Mons it does not necessarily excuse me from all further service. What I do, I do because I must, and there's an end of it."

But there is no such thing as "an end of it" with Stella. Harping on a subject is her chief talent. 'Pon my soul, I wonder how her husband endures it. If I had to live with her I should go out of my senses in a fortnight; but he, poor ass, seems perfectly happy, and goes about wearing an expression of almost inane content. He is a not too successful playwright by trade, and most of his work is done at home. I was present once when he returned after an absence of a day or two, and a more unseemly public display of sentiment and affection than he and Stella and their daughter Doris, aged four, rounded off between them I pray Heaven I may never be called upon to witness. I returned to my bachelor abode with a greater sense of gratitude than I had ever experienced before.

Stella asked me one day if I had "kept up" with "that little nurse thing who used to come round with the boys." I responded with an emphatic negative, adding :—

"I happen to know that she has joined the British Sisters' Union in Gower Street as a probationer, but I see no reason for carrying curiosity beyond that point."

I have rather a bitter turn of phrase when I care to employ it, but Stella is incapable of appreciating satire.

"I wonder you don't take her to a *matinée* or to tea sometimes," she observed.

My reply was calculated to freeze mercury.

"Doubtless," said I, "you also wonder why I do not leave promiscuous bouquets at stage doors and take young ladies of the chorus for river picnics to Clieveden Woods."

Robert laughed.

"Why don't you ?" he demanded. "There are worse ways of spending a Sunday than that."

"Ah, Dicky, you want a wife," said Stella, and put her hand in Robert's to show,

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presumably, the kind of thing I might expect if I were to follow her advice.

When Stella makes this observation I lose no time in looking for my hat and finding it. Robert grins at me through the window as I go down the street.

I observe that the best writers avoid the introduction of characters which they do not propose to develop. It would, therefore, seem expedient to say a word or two in regard to the lady whom my sister so flippantly termed "that little nurse thing."

Her real name is Avice Brooke. She was one of the Brookes of Suffolk—important people in their day, but sadly reduced by land-tax, war, and thoughtless speculation. She was a V.A.D. at the hospital, and one afternoon to my surprise I saw her enter the side gate of my garden wheeling the chair of a poor fellow who had lost his legs.

I do not encourage the presence of women, and cannot pretend I was pleased. After a moment's thought, I went into the garden and addressed her. Not wishing to be too chilly at the outset, I said, "Good afternoon."

She wheeled the chair under the shade of the mulberry tree before bothering to reply, and I noticed with indignation that she cut off the head of a very promising geranium by carelessly taking the chair too near one of the beds.

"Oh, are you Mr. Flintheart?" she asked —very off-handedly, I thought.

I bowed and stooped to pick up the fallen blossom.

"Did I do that?"

"I'm afraid you did," I replied.

"How dreadful for you," she said.

"Oh, please don't mention it. You are unfamiliar with the garden, and doubtless did not notice the position of the beds. I always make a point of approaching this spot from the other side."

She looked at me closely, then at the fellow who had lost his legs.

"These things are so important, aren't they?" said she.

I confess I was a little surprised at the tone of her reply.

"May I ask," I inquired, "why the hospital authorities have sent an escort to-day?"

"Certainly. Symonds and Halford came back smelling of whisky last night."

I blushed hotly.

"And that's against the rules."

"In my house," I answered, "I make my own rules."

"You may not understand," she went on, "you probably have no reason to understand, but certain things are bad for wounded men."

At that she turned away and joined a group of men who were sitting on the grass. And, well, I simply walked straight back to the house without another word.

BRONCE—my butler-valet—and I made a point of sharing the task of giving them tea. Bronce carried the tray, and I went round with the cakes and other things. On this particular day I naturally went first to Nurse Brooke. She seemed over-long in making her selection. Presently she folded a piece of bread and butter (it was butter) and looked at me.

"I suppose," she said, "you think this lets you out?"

"Really, I don't understand," I replied.

"Some people don't." She took a bite. "This is butter?"

"It is."

"How do you manage?"

"I prefer margarine," I added. "And my household *has* to prefer it."

"It really is extraordinary the sacrifices people will make," she said, after a little pause.

I am afraid I answered rather hotly.

"Surely, everyone must do something."

"Oh, I agree. But don't you think you might offer those things to some of the boys now?"

It was dismissal—neither more nor less—and coming as it did from a girl who was certainly not more than one-and-twenty, I was not a little riled. She was, however, in a sense, my guest.

Every afternoon during the week that followed she came with the boys, and her manner towards me seemed increasingly arbitrary. Once she came into the house to borrow a book, but I would not let her take it until I had found a duster and thoroughly wiped the cover.

"My staff is very remiss," I explained, "and if I didn't do a certain amount myself the whole place would go to rack and ruin."

"A very sad case," she returned. "The discomfort must be awful. I had a letter this morning from my brother at the front. He says he has such a nice dug-out."

I was determined not to betray irritation, and replied:—

"I understand the conditions are greatly improved since the early days."

"Och!" she exclaimed, and, throwing aside the book, walked out of the room with her head in the air.

Neither that day nor the next did she address a single remark to me.

It was on the following Sunday an incident occurred which brought us into conversation again. With customary carelessness she wheeled an invalid chair over my right foot —or rather its substitute. Of this I was unaware, since the manufacturer had supplied it with springs in lieu of nerves.

"That was your foot—sorry," she said.

"Was it?" I replied. "I didn't notice."

"Well, he weighs sixteen stone," said she, nodding at the occupant of the chair. It was a different fellow—one I hadn't seen before.

"That being so, perhaps I had better go inside and take off my boot. Something may have broken, you see."

She looked puzzled.

"Broken—what?"

"It's a delicate mechanism," I replied, and moved away. I had only gone a couple of yards when she laid a hand on my sleeve.

"Is anything the matter with your foot?" she asked.

"It would be hard to answer that without visiting its burial-place," I responded.

"I don't understand."

"I happened to mislay it in France nearly four years ago."

"Oh, you poor dear," she exclaimed, in quite a different voice. "And I've been so—— What must you think of me?"

It is curious to relate, but after that trifling affair her manner underwent an entire change. I cannot exactly describe it, but somehow she contrived to make me feel like one of her patients. The sensation was surprising and not altogether unpleasant. After a while I became quite used to her presence in my garden, and overcame my original resentment. Sometimes we shared an hour or so of conversation—that is to say, she talked and I listened, a condition which I believe usually exists when men and women meet in discussion.

WE drifted through the summer and autumn of 1918 very pleasantly, and then came the closing of the hospital.

I had built a kind of glass rotunda at the garden end where the boys could sit during the colder months, and read papers or have a sing-song. The idea came to me as the result of a remark of hers that, of course, the garden wouldn't be any use during the winter. I must say that the builder's charges were a disgrace, but I had gingered them up pretty well to get the place in order before the cold weather set in. And it was worth it—from the boys' point of view.

"You are very ridiculous to do this," Avice said, when I proudly introduced her to the little glass pavilion. "The war will be over soon."

"There's no reason for taking that view at all," I answered. "At any rate, we must make the most of our opportunities."

She looked at me queerly.

"Do you ever do that?" she asked.

There is no denying it, but I did feel hurt, and looked it, perhaps, for the next moment she slipped a hand through my arm and said:—

"You are a funny old thing."

"Forty-one is not old," I replied.

"I know," she said, in the strangest little voice. So I asked her advice about what we should get in the way of magazines, and the talk took a sensible turn again.

I can't quite describe how I felt when she told me the hospital was closing.

"Yes, but can't you bring them round just the same?" I asked.

"I shall be too busy, worse luck."

And she told me she was going as a probationer to this Nursing Association.

"But do you have to do that?"

"Yeps."

It was very impertinent, but I asked what salary she would draw. Her reply fairly staggered me.

"You can't live on so little," I gasped.

"Of course, I can."

"Look here," I said, "will you—would you be offended if I made a proposal?"

"I don't know. I'll tell you after you've made it," she answered.

"It's just this. I—I'm not a man who readily makes friends. I get used to certain conditions and—er—persons, and—well, change and all that kind of thing is distasteful to me."

"Go on," she nodded.

"I will—yes. Lately—only quite lately—it's occurred to me that perhaps I'm not taking proper care of myself—indeed, I doubt whether I'm entirely capable of doing so alone."

"Have you realized that?" she said.

"So I turned it over in my mind and I honestly believe that you could be of tremendous assistance. Apart from my headaches, I do experience considerable discomfort with my leg, and if you would consent to accept a regular——"

I found she was looking at me and lost the thread of my request. In her eyes was a strange mixture of laughter and tears.

"I understand," she said, "but I'm afraid I couldn't nurse just a—a part of you. You see," she added, "I'm not—not qualified for that."

And before I could answer she had slipped away and was laughing and talking with the boys at the far end of the pavilion.

And that was the last intimate talk we had together.

The possession of money is a very doubtful blessing, and often is responsible for the performance of the stupidest acts and suggestions. I realized after it was too late how my offer, made though it was with the best intentions, could hardly have failed to offend a girl of delicate sensibility and good breeding.

"Throwing aside the book she came to borrow, she walked out of the room with her head in the air."

Bronce surprised me very much by remarking a month later that the place seemed very quiet and dull without our daily visitors. Accidentally he had stumbled on the same thought which was passing through my own mind. His tone, however, savoured too much of sentiment for my taste, taking into consideration the fact that he had betrayed little, if any, enthusiasm when the boys were actually with us. In view of this my reply was a trifle sharp-edged.

"Perhaps you will find more time now to look after things properly," said I.

He raised his shoulders and turned toward the door without a word. I did not propose to put up with insolence from my staff, so I called him back, and remarked, with studied sarcasm :—

"As an inducement to do so you may consider your wages have been raised ten pounds a year."

Detecting, as I thought, a note of irony in his profusely-expressed thanks, I took my hat from the hall-stand and went out to see Stella, who annoyed me very much in the manner set forth earlier in these pages.

STELLA and Robert appeared to be plotting against me after some fashion of their own. Naturally, they thought I was too dull to realize this fact, which only shows what very poor readers of character they are. It would do them any amount of good, I thought, to be stirred up and have the calm of their content rippled. It is not right for people to be so disgustingly happy—they become a nuisance to everybody else. I reflected that I was not particularly happy myself and saw no reason why they should be. In short, I decided that I would do all in my power to make them miserable. And the very next day I had a golden opportunity. I met Donald Felton at the Garrick Club, and he carried me off to a quiet corner.

"Isn't that fellow, Robert Wainwright, some relative of yours ?" said he.

"Brother-in-law."

He nodded. "I've just bought the rights of the big Paris hit — a play called 'L'Ingénue.' Occurred to me he might be the very man to do the English version. You know—that light touch of his !"

I didn't know, but I agreed enthusiastically.

"If he'd tackle the job I'd like him to go over to Paris for a week and soak himself in the spirit of the thing. Merely to read it wouldn't be half so effective. Think he'd be interested ?"

"My dear Felton," I replied, "he's the one man for the job—an extraordinarily brilliant fellow."

I gave him Robert's address, and left the club chuckling. Robert snatched from the fold and delivered into the arms of Paris for an entire week was almost too good to contemplate. Knowing that theatrical managers are sometimes a trifle dilatory in their methods, I sent a line to Felton urging him to settle with Robert forthwith, as I had reason to believe he might take on something else unless speedily captured and contracted with.

I waited forty-eight hours on the rack of expectancy, at the close of which a wire from Stella arrived, begging me to come with all speed.

I went—as slowly as I could.

Robert and Stella I found in a state of excitement bordering on hysteria.

"It's his first big chance—bound to be a terrific success." "Lord, we were so broke." "Absolutely wonderful." "Sure to take London by storm." "I knew they'd see how frightfully clever Robert is." "Can't think how they thought about me." "Isn't it glorious—amazing !"

I never listened to a more cacophonous duet. Felton hadn't mentioned my name, a circumstance for which I was duly grateful.

Presently the story was told me in more coherent form.

"And so Robert is going away for a week," said I, rubbing my hands luxuriously.

"Matter of fact," he replied, "I want Stella to come too."

Here was an unexpected turn. I looked at Stella imploringly, and observed with satisfaction she was shaking her head.

"She's never been to Paris, and she's aching to go."

"I know, but I can't," said Stella, wistfully.

"Tell her she must," urged Robert. "We may not have such a chance again."

"I can't leave Doris. You know, darling, I'd give anything to go, but how can I ?"

"All right," said Robert, "and I shall make a mess of the play. I'm rotten at French and sha'n't understand a word."

"But Doris is so little, and you know Nurse is all right, but she's only been with us a fortnight."

"Doesn't matter," said Robert, shrugging his shoulders.

"Yes, it does, darling, but it's so difficult."

"I'll tell them to send me a copy of the thing. There's no point in going over."

And then, of course, I did an insanely stupid thing.

"If only to put an end to this very vulgar dispute," said I, "while you're away send the confounded Nurse and child round to me."

I couldn't attempt to describe the scene which followed. They fell upon me, the pair of them, Stella with kisses, Robert with punches and handshakes. I am rather disposed to believe Robert would have kissed

me too if I hadn't hit him in the face with a book.

It was a pitiful end to my ambitious dreams.

Stella and Robert left on the Thursday morning, and about five that afternoon Bronce admitted the nurse and Doris. Doris appeared to be subdued and inspired with awe, but the nurse, on the other hand, was blowing her nose and sneezing in the most violent fashion.

"What ever is the matter with you?" I demanded.

She replied that she had pains in the back and a very bad headache.

"Confound it," said I, "you've got influenza."

"I shall be all right, sir, to-morrow," said she.

I called to Bronce. "Don't send away that taxi." Then turning to the girl—"I'm not going to have you sneezing and spluttering and infecting with germs my entire household. Climb into that cab—go home—and get to bed."

"But I can't," she said, rather weakly. "There's Miss Doris—and—oh, I do feel bad."

I didn't argue—I simply put her in the cab and sent her away. Really, nothing could have been more annoying. I slammed the front door furiously, and returned to my study. On the hearth-rug sat Doris playing with the best Ming dog in my collection of Oriental china.

"I would like three sweeties," she remarked as I came in.

"Nonsense," said I, "sweets are bad for little girls."

She looked at me with an expression of surprise.

"You're silly, mumma says! I would like four sweeties—big ones."

There was something strangely imperative in her voice—imperative with the threat of tears. I remembered that earlier in the day I happened to have bought a few sweets, and I hastily pulled out the drawer containing them. While she was smearing her face with the things, I rang the bell for Bronce.

"This is a terrible business," I said, when he appeared. "I've had to send the nurse away. Has Fanny, or cook, any experience with children?"

He shook his head.

"Fanny was an only child, sir, and cook isn't my idea of a mother—her marriage not having been blessed, as you may say, sir."

"What about you?"

"No, sir," he replied, gravely. "Once, for a lark, I tried to dress my sister's youngest, but couldn't tell the back of her clothes from the front."

"Then it's impossible," I said.

"Better wire for her mother, sir."

I told him not to be an ass.

"Seems strange," I added, "if you and I and a couple of women can't look after a child for one week. Confound it!"

"Mothers are very particular, sir," he observed, gravely.

"Are they? Then it's up to us to check this child over and see that we return it in the same condition as it was delivered. Doris! Come here."

She looked up and shook her head.

"Well, I can't," she said. "This man is taking this cat for a walk. He must."

"Sit at that table, Bronce. You can see for yourself what she has on. Write it down. One dress, sash, ribbon in the hair, socks, and shoes. What have you got on beside, Doris? Underneath, I mean."

"Me," she replied.

"Clothes?" I demanded.

The question was ignored. She crawled over to a book-shelf and tugged at one of my vellum editions of Walter Pater.

"Don't touch those books," said I.

"It's a big motor coming out of a galage."

"Never mind what it is, don't touch it."

"But I must," she said, and the book fell with a bang to the floor.

I crossed to her side.

"Put out your tongue."

"It's rude to."

"Do as I say."

For a wonder she obeyed.

"Put down—'tongue rather white, throat a little red, one abrasion on left knee and four bruises on right.'"

I saw Bronce's shoulders shaking as he wrote.

"Don't you laugh at me," I warned him, and possessed myself of Doris's wrist. "Now do keep still and look at my watch. Pulse seventy-two."

"Seventy-two," repeated Bronce, as sternly as a tailor.

"You'd better sign it, and that'll do."

He obeyed, and left the room.

"Shall we play that game again?" Doris inquired.

I pointed out that it was not a game.

"Then you be a creepy mousey and I'll be a kind tiger."

My trousers and temper were fellow-sufferers in what followed. Doris may have her ideal of kind tigers, but to my way of thinking they differ very little from the ordinary variety. After feats of astonishing energy, she surprised me beyond measure by declaring:—

"I'm so tired—I want my barbassie now."

"Your what?" I demanded.

"Barbassie," she repeated.

"I don't know what it is."

"Oh, I do want my barbassie," she wailed.

I began to feel desperate.

"If you'll tell me what it is I'll get it," I said.

"Barbassie, barbassie, barbassie."

I seized a dictionary and sought in vain for the word.

"Look here," said I, "you run upstairs and have your bath, and I'll try and find one."

"Yes, my barbassie," she said, smiles replacing tears.

It was too ridiculous. Heaven knows why mothers teach children to use words like that. Bath is a reasonable word: barbassie means nothing.

"Come along," said Doris, tugging at my sleeve.

"Come where?"

"To my barbassie."

"But surely you can bath yourself?"

"You can?"

"Of course, I can."

"You can me, then."

I thank goodness I didn't meet the maid-servants as we climbed to the bathroom. I turned on the water while she stood on a chair and held her arms above her head.

"All right," I mumbled, "you slip off your clothes."

"You can," she repeated.

IT was more than I had bargained for, but one simply had to make the best of it. I'm ashamed to say I broke several tapes of the absurdly complicated undergarments. Then I picked her up, warm and kicking, and plumped her in the bath. In writing of this episode I am frankly out of my depth, for it provided me with sensations entirely foreign to experience. I was conscious of a pitiable awkwardness mixed with a strangely unfamiliar delight. The dimpled pink body sitting so bolt upright in faintly green water was an infinitely tender and appealing spectacle. For the first time I understood the pride folks feel in the possession of children—and how sometimes they want to hug them very tight. There is a purity of line in the body of a child which surpasses all other forms of beauty. I was thinking something of the kind when she inquired, practically:—

"Aren't you going to wash me?"

So I took the soap and washed her.

I honestly believe I should have enjoyed that were it not for the appalling difficulties attendant on the task. For the benefit of the novice, I would like to point out that if you lift a child's leg when it is sitting in the bath there is a positive danger of its head going under water. This was only one of the discoveries I made. Another was that no fabric from the looms of East or West—no weaving of floss or fine-drawn thread—is comparable to the touch of a child's skin glistening with water drops and bubbling with soap.

During the course of the bath I was dispatched on two errands—the first to fetch Doris's "swimmy toys" (a lifeboat rendered unseaworthy by many storms, and a celluloid goldfish which, owing to several perforations, all too readily filled with water and foundered)—the second, to procure her nightdress. This latter task presented very grave difficulties, and I sorted over the queer little garments in her basket half-a-dozen times before determining which was or was not the nightdress.

Afterwards I carried her up to the spare room, where she and the carpet shared a supper of cocoa and animal biscuits. Up to this point our relations had been friendly, but here an unfortunate misunderstanding arose. I dipped a spoon in the cocoa and offered her the contents, but she decided unreasonably to feed herself. To avoid argument I replaced the spoon in the cup, whereupon she relented and said she would like me to feed her after all. So once again I dipped the spoon, and at this she set up a yell, pointed an accusing finger, and declared that it was not the same spoonful—that it was a different "piece of cocoa" I was offering. Only by the exercise of the greatest resource, tact, and mendacity was I able to avert a scene. In the end I succeeded, but I registered a vow that I would take Stella severely to task for allowing her child to indulge in such impossible subtleties.

"And now to bed," said I. "Come along."

Doris shook her head.

"Not going to s'eep in here," said she.

"Nonsense," said I, and turned down the coverlet.

"I can't," said Doris. "I'm going to s'eep with you."

"Come along," I repeated, firmly.

"This room is big and goosey—I'm going to s'eep with you."

It was very trying, but I was determined to make a strong stand.

"Now, now, now! It's high time you were in bed."

Her voice rose to a wail.

"Mummy said I could s'eep with you."

I set my jaw and walked toward her.

"Mummy said I could. I don' feel well."

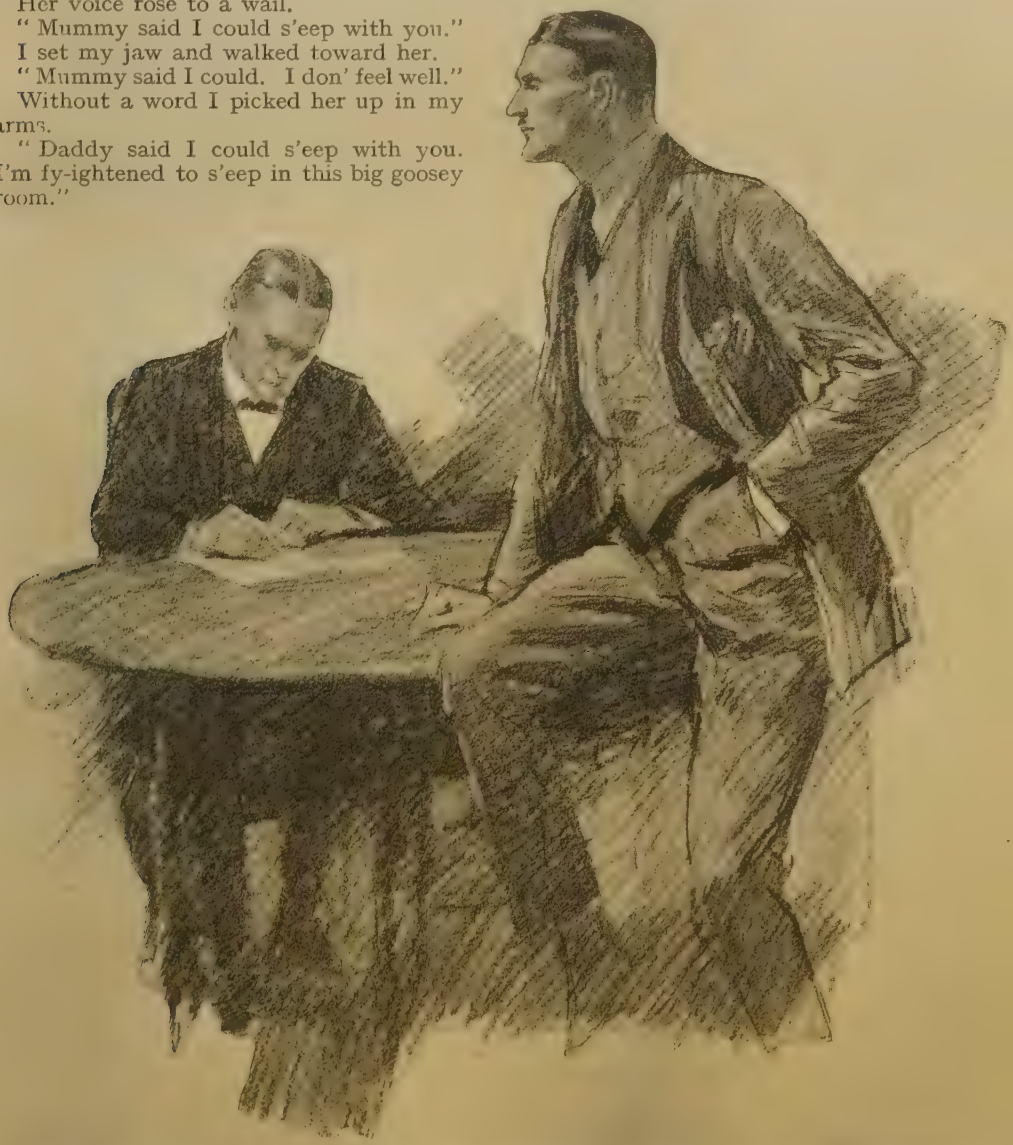
Without a word I picked her up in my arms.

"Daddy said I could s'eep with you. I'm fy-ightened to s'eep in this big goosey room."

I said nothing—but put her to bed straight away and no nonsense about it—in my bed.

I suppose it was weak, but she was only a little thing, and even I myself sometimes feel a queer loneliness in this creaky, echoing house.

At dinner I usually converse a little with Bronce, but that night I was very quiet and shivery. I had a weird prickly feeling all over me as though something were going to happen. I can describe it in no other way. I told him to serve coffee in my bedroom,



"Sit at that table, Bronce. You can see for yourself what she has on. Write it down. One dress, sash ——."

and explained this unusual request by saying :—

"I don't think a child should be left alone."

He answered stupidly enough :—

"It's a great question, sir, whether anyone ought to be left alone."

Doris was lying with her face to the wall, and I wondered whether all children were so flushed and rosy while asleep, and so pretty, too. I couldn't remember whether I had kissed her or not, and mindful that children have to be kissed at night, I stooped over and performed the duty perfunctorily.

Then I set to work and lit a fire in case the child should feel chilly in the night. For a long while I sat before it, watching the pieces of coal gathering warmth and cheer from each other. Presently one lustily-burning lump tumbled hissing into the grate, where the cheery red of its countenance faded to maroon and dulled to grey and black. It seemed strange that, isolated from its fellows, it could not burn as brightly as before. A parallel arose in my mind which I hastened to dismiss. To my surprise I found it was nearly two o'clock, hours later than my usual bedtime. I wondered what had kept me up so late, and began to finger the buttons of my waistcoat.

"Shall I be able to get into bed without disturbing the child ?" I thought.

If she waked, probably she would not go to sleep again, and possibly would want to be cuddled or talked to. That, of course, would be—rather agreeable.

I hung my coat over a chair-back and released my collar from the stud. Suddenly a voice said :—

"I've got a teddick."

Swinging round, I saw Doris peering over the eiderdown with one finger pressed to her forehead.

"Got such a teddick," she repeated.

"Hush," I said, "go to sleep."

"But my ted-dicks."

She seemed very sure about it. I took the little hand in mine and noticed with surprise how dry and hot it felt. Then I remembered the nurse and her confounded influenza.

"Does your back ache, too ?" I demanded.

"Um ! Does."

"Oh, damnation !" I muttered, and rummaged through the medicine chest for a clinical thermometer. Of course, I was frightened—scared to death. A well child was difficult enough—but a sick one ! Stella and Robert in Paris, too. People have no right to leave their children to the mercy of strangers.

I shook the thermometer furiously, and smashed it against the glass top of the washstand. Next moment I was on the landing yelling for Bronce. After a while he appeared, blinking and ruffled. It was the first time I had seen him with unbrushed hair.

"I'm going to telephone for Dr. Chasemoor," I said, "and while I'm doing that you will go round and fetch him."

WHAT with getting my call through and the infernal time Bronce took to put on a pair of trousers, it was nearly half-past two before the doctor arrived. I had something to say about the dilatory methods of the faculty as we mounted the stairs together, However, he lost no time after that.

"With children a high temperature means very little," he said, shaking down the mercury before I had an opportunity of seeing what it registered.

"But it's 'flu ?"

"Certainly it's 'flu."

"Well, then, hang it," said I.

"I'm with you there," said he.

"This kind only lasts a day or so, doesn't it ? She'll be all right to-morrow, won't she ?"

He was using a stethoscope, and motioned me to be silent.

"Depends," was the most comforting observation he would bring himself to make. "Why is the child here—where is her mother ?"

I explained.

"You have the Paris address, I suppose ?"

"Yes," I replied, "but I sha'n't wire."

"You won't ? It's rather a responsibility."

"What the devil can she do that I can't do quite as well ?"

"Everything," he answered; "one never knows what turns it'll take."

"I've taken on this job and I'm going to see it through," said I. "Be most thoughtless to send a wire and scare the life out of the pair of them. Besides——"

I didn't finish the sentence, but I couldn't help remembering the expression on Stella's face when she knew that really and truly she was going to Paris. It was essential also that Robert should have a clear brain and conscience if he were to avoid making a mess of his first decent commission. So I added :—

"I have quite made up my mind on that score."

"Please yourself, and I'll send in a nurse."

Then I had a brilliant idea.

"You won't do that, either. I'll get a nurse, and I'll get her now—and you'll stop in this room until I've got her."

A moment later I was speaking to the Night Warden of the Gower Street institute.

"Nurse Brooke is only a probationer," came the answer. "She cannot be sent out to attend cases."

"Don't talk such nonsense," I shouted. "I want Nurse Brooke and no one else."

"She is not qualified."

"I don't care a hang for qualifications. Send her at once."

She was a horrible woman at the other end of that wire. I could almost see her face go grim and hear her eyebrows snap.

"Ring off, please," she requested.

"Wait. If you don't send her I'll come and fetch her. If you do send her I'll forward my cheque for a hundred pounds to-night."

I heard confused sounds as of voices in consultation. Presently someone else spoke.

"If we consent to your request, you must quite understand we take no responsibility."

I think my reply was well to the point.

"I am writing the cheque now."

"She will be along within the hour," said the voice.

When I came back to the bedroom I found the doctor preparing to go.

"Nothing to wait for," he said. "This is just the early stage. I'll be round in the morning."

He gave me a bottle of physic he had brought and told me there was nothing to worry about—yet.

"WHAT'S it all about?" inquired Avice. "You don't look very ill, Mr. Flintheart."

'I was so afraid you wouldn't come." was all I could answer.

She looked at me queerly.

"Then something really is the matter?"

To the best of my ability I explained the situation.

"You poor old, old thing—how awful for you!"

"You see," I said, "I've never had a child like this before. She was all right when she came here, and of course I shall be blamed if she isn't all right when I return her."

"I expect that influences you a great deal—far more than the child herself."

"She's rather a nice little thing," I mumbled.

"Where is she?"

"In my bed."

Avice smiled.

"That was rather pally of you. Well, now I've come you can get off to bed with an easy conscience."

"I shall do no such thing. For all I know, you may be as ignorant of children as I am."

"Then why did you send for me?" she inquired, piercing my armour at a thrust.

"To have someone here," I answered, lamely.

"You could have had your sister here in ten hours if you cared to wire."

"If you were a mother would you like to receive a wire of that kind when you were ten hours away?" I demanded, hotly.

"Not very much," said she.

"Very well, then!"

"But it's rather a responsibility."

"I know—but you needn't remind me."

"I won't." Then: "We'll manage, won't we?"

That plural, with its suggestion of partnership, gave me an extraordinary sense of support.

"Oh, I am glad you came," I said.

"And so am I," said she.

We tip-toed upstairs and found our patient in a restless sleep. I was amazed at the rapidity with which outwardly she seemed to have passed from health to sickness. The small face, so plump and bonny overnight, looked worn and fallen in the grey light of early morning.

I watched Avice do all manner of dexterous things with the pillows and coverings without disturbing the little sleeper. If I had attempted anything of the kind disaster would surely have followed. Presently she turned and addressed me.

"An ill child seems wrong, doesn't it?"

I nodded.

"But you don't think she's going to be really ill, do you?"

"One never knows. They are up and down so quickly. 'Flu is so inexplicable. I've an idea, too, this is going to be a fight. Oh, I say, don't look like that."

"Well, you mustn't say such things. They're unnecessarily alarming."

"What a strange being you are! I thought you were so phlegmatic."

"So I am, but——"

"I know you've had a bothering day."

"Nothing of the kind. It's been perfectly all right—a lot of it—even memorable."

"Well, let's go and fill a hot-water bottle. Have you got one?"

I took her down to the bathroom, where some water-bottles were hanging on a nail near the gas-ring. While I filled a kettle I saw her looking at the sponge tray, in which reposed Doris's "swimmy toys."

"You have a lot of beautiful things in this house, haven't you?" she said.

"I've always been fond of collecting," I replied.

She smiled.

"That's the most beautiful I've seen, so far. That grubby, practical old sponge-tray with a baby's toys in it."

"It's curious," said I, "that you should think so too. Something of the kind occurred to me, but I was afraid to give expression to it. There! I think that's hot enough. Shall I make some tea while you take it upstairs?"

"Um! It would be cheering."

DURING the days that followed I never left the sick room, even for a few moments, without hastening to return loaded down with fears of disaster or buoyed up with hopes of miraculous recovery.

The doctor warned us on the second day that he feared it would turn to pneumonia. I suppose I was somewhere toward the end of my tether, or probably I should have set about him for adding a new terror to my alarms. As it happened he was wrong, although God knows the havoc wrought by that inexplicable 'flu germ was complete enough. It has been my unhappy experience more often than I care to remember to be present at the passing of men, but I have never seen life hang by a finer hair than that which united the spirit to the body of our little visitor. That it held at all was a miracle—but a human miracle. I call it such because the salvation was the work of a woman's hands.

By some divine insight Avice found the hair, and, with a gentleness and craft beyond definition, she waxed and strengthened it, and built it up strand by tiny strand, until it was a thread, and then a cord, and next a chain, and last a smile and a dry-throated request for "two sweeties—big ones."

That was in the dawn of the fourth day. I had just returned from an errand, and, hearing, I made a bolt for the door because my throat was rattling, gurgling, with an unfamiliar laughter of the kind that no one wants to hear. You see, I had not slept very much, and that upsets a man. I doubt whether Avice had slept at all, but she seemed strangely unaffected, and at any rate it is natural to put one's own troubles foremost.

I filled the bath to the brim with cold water and, throwing off my clothes, jumped in. Perhaps it was the chill and freshness which made me behave like an idiot, for I forgot all about washing myself, and instead had a regular Battle of Jutland with the punctured goldfish and the unseaworthy lifeboat.

Enveloped in clean underwear and arrayed in a new suit, I felt like a two-year-old when I made my reappearance.

Avice was looking out of the opened window at the lemon and silver of the new day. I crossed to her side and in silence we watched the light grow and the shadows lengthen and begin to form. And I was struck by the newness, the simplicity, and the innocence of the world.

From somewhere high in the heavens came the drone of an aeroplane engine.

"Listen!" she said. "There he goes. Like an angel passing over the city to say that a child will live."

A flash of sunlight illumined the number on the lower plane of the machine. It was a queer coincidence, and I started.

"He is going farther than that with the tidings," said I. "By the time the good citizens fall to their morning eggs and bacon and shake out the folds of their morning news that little fellow will settle on an aerodrome just outside Paris and await—orders."

"How do you know?" she asked.

"I wasn't very hopeful last night," I replied. "I thought that would be the best thing to do."

"Weren't you asleep, then?"

"Not so as you'd notice. I was at Hendon two hours ago. It might have been necessary for Stella to return quickly—and at any rate it'll be a pleasant experience flying home."

For quite a while she was silent, then she put her hand into mine.

"You are a dear person, aren't you?" she said. "Mr. Flintheart, the practical martinet, who leaves the door of his soul ajar."

"Nonsense," I answered, brusquely. "It is you who—succeeded—who bore the brunt."

"Oh, professionally, and very overpaid!"

My reply seemed to surprise her.

"Would you mind, then, pretending it was otherwise?"

"How—otherwise?"

"Well, that we fought this battle for something that was dear to us—something which seems to me far above profession, or achievement, or reward."

"I understand," she nodded. "You want to create a good memory. Something to be glad of when everything is—as it was in the beginning."

I don't know why, but her words produced in me a sense of blank despair. They conjured up a picture of Stella and Robert carrying away Doris, her little basket, and her "swimmy toys"—and another, even more wretched to contemplate, of Avice giving her Gower Street address to a taxi driver—and lastly, a neat monochrome of a middle-aged man executing a precise index of his books and marvelling greatly at his ingenuity.

"We saved this child's life," I broke out, "and properly speaking it belongs to you and me. I shall refuse to hand her over."

"You won't," she answered, smiling. "You can't."

"I can. I will—even if I have to fight it in a court of law."

"And how about—them? Where she belongs?"

"They're married, aren't they? They can have another, I suppose. Very well, then!"

"Very well, then," she repeated.

"You'll help me, won't you? You've a half-interest."

"Not I," she answered. "My part ends here—and so does yours. You see, we've no title. You told me once you never took

"From somewhere high in the heavens came the drone of an aeroplane engine. 'Listen!' she said. 'There he goes. Like an angel passing over the city to say that a child will live.'"

shares in an enterprise unless you saw chances of profit."

"Well, what's the alternative?" I demanded, desperately.

"Perhaps there isn't one," said she.

But there was—and when we knew it by heart we went over and whispered it to Doris, who was asleep.

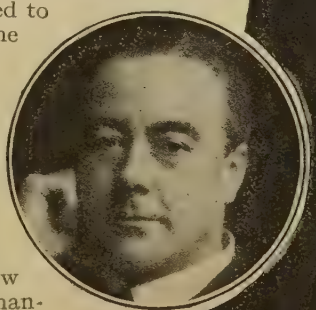
Mannerisms and Make-up

How Some of Our Leading Variety Stars Invented Their "Trade Marks."

by Fenn Sherie

THE principal secret of success in Vaudeville is originality. Every music-hall artiste who, in professional parlance, "tops the bill" has attained that coveted honour by creating a new personality, by developing certain characteristic tricks of voice, movement, or make-up that distinguish his performance from all others. To hit upon a personality that appeals to the public taste may require years of study, or it may come about by a mere chance.

Chirgwin, the "White-eyed Kaffir," originally appeared with his face blackened all over, until one evening a fly happened to enter his eye just before he was due to appear—with the result that his efforts to remove the intruder produced the "white eye" which became the comedian's trade mark.



Once his position is established, a star dare not wander from his self-made path. No matter how versatile he may be, the mannerisms and make-up that have brought him to the glory of large type must be retained if the public is not to be disappointed. It is interesting to learn from some of our foremost comedians how they originated the characters that have made them famous.

The predominant features of the make-up that was originally associated with the name of George Robey are a clerical coat, minus collar, and a pair of enormous

GEORGE ROBEY.

eyebrows, whilst among his many mannerisms —or rather Robeyisms—perhaps the most amusing is that little trick of pausing suddenly in the midst of a sentence and staring at his audience with a look of pained surprise every time they laugh at him.

The "Prime Minister of Mirth" is a man of method, a comedian who takes his business seriously, and an actor in the best sense of the word. The secret of his unique position lies mainly, of course, in the spontaneity of his humour, but another factor, only one degree less important, is the simplicity of his make-up.

"Many of my laughs are obtained entirely by facial expression," Mr. Robey said when interviewed, "and realizing this I decided to make my face up accordingly. From the point of view of the audience, the most important parts of my charming figure are the whites of my eyes and my teeth. Originally I tried wearing the usual white collar with the clerical coat, but I found that it detracted from these features, and I therefore abandoned it. Then I decided to accentuate what Nature had already given me by thickening by eyebrows and touching up the other natural lines of the face—with the result that my smile can now be seen for miles.

"How did I invent the idea of staring at my audience? I didn't. It just happened. A flippant remark in the course of my patter —a hysterical shriek from a lady in the stalls—expression of injured innocence and righteous indignation on my part—more shrieks from lady—audience joined in chorus, and there it was. Too good to be missed (as a gentleman in the gallery once said when he hit me with a ripe tomato), so I've done it ever since."

A lady artiste of unique personality is Nellie Wallace. Here is a woman who, because she has no qualms as to what people may think about her personal appearance, succeeds in making a screamingly funny burlesque of a certain type of her own sex—the "Dame"—which no man can equal.

Her clothes—the "Wallace Collection," as she calls them—are pathetic examples of faded finery, whilst her quaint mannerisms and original expressions are as truly feminine as they are funny.

"It was by accident that I discovered my ability to make people laugh," says Miss Wallace. "When quite a little girl I was with one of the old 'fit-up' companies, touring in melodrama. One night we were playing 'East Lynne,' and the part of Joyce, the little maid, was allotted to me. When we came to the scene in which little Willie dies, I had to go to the door to admit Mr. Carlyle, the child's father, and break the sad news to him with tears in my voice. I managed the tears all right, but they seemed to strike the audience as funny, and instead of producing stifled sobs, as I had anticipated, my words resulted in a yell of laughter. After that I was ordered to specialize in comedy, and I played servant-girl and other similar parts until it was suggested that I should go on to the music-halls. My make-up was not quite so eccentric when I first appeared in vaudeville, but I built it up by degrees. My eyebrows gradually wandered from their proper place until they soared high upon my forehead, whilst various friends presented me with little odds and ends from their wardrobes and rag-bags until I became as you see me now. There are several

NELLIE WALLACE.

treasures here that I would not lose for a fortune. This fashionable jumper was made for me by one of the chorus girls during my last pantomime engagement—and there isn't another like it in the world. As for millinery, what do you think of this charming Paris creation? Out of the ordinary? As a matter of fact it's out of the dustbin—I've had to rescue it four times already. It may not look valuable, but it is worth untold pounds of sugar to me.

"I try to make my performance a real character study of one of Life's faded flowers—and since I see a woman's weakness from a woman's point of view, I know just what points to burlesque. That is where, if I may say so, I have the advantage over the man 'dame'—I can be absurdly feminine without having to strain after effects. Off the stage I must admit that I fall to the same temptations as the majority of my sex, for fashions and fripperies have a great attraction for me. But that is another story."

A shy comedian is an exception to the rule, and although the majority of our foremost entertainers are modest, very few of them could be described as shy, by any stretch of the imagination. That is why Jack Pleasants—"the bashful limit" as Sir Oswald Stoll once designated him—stands alone, for he is just the same retiring personality on or off the stage.

"In my young days I once went to sing a song at a Sunday-school concert," Mr. Pleasants told me. "I cannot say that I really experienced a sensation of stage-fright, but I had a sort of feeling that I hoped the audience wouldn't notice me when I stepped upon the platform. Amateur performers will understand exactly what I mean. I took a peep round the corner of the proscenium and was immediately hailed with a roar of laughter. I dodged back again, and when I had recovered my breath, I walked quietly to the centre of the platform. Then I discovered that I had forgotten the first line of my song, and in my hesitation I took a step forward and opened my mouth without producing a sound. This resulted in another burst of laughter.

"How I struggled through the show, I can't remember, but when I got home I thought it over, and came to the conclusion that if my shyness was the source of so much mirth I might be able to make a living at it. Eventually I took to the stage as a profession, and I have been publicly shy twice nightly ever since.

"I endeavour to get my comedy from a study of human nature, and my clothes must be in keeping with my character—a size too small, perhaps, but made, in the first place, for wear in everyday life. The eccentric inventions of clever costumiers are always unconvincing, to my mind.

"The cape coat originally belonged to a school-girl whose brother aspired to fame as a comedian, and acquired the cloak for one of his 'props.' Somehow the public did not take very kindly to him, and he left the profession for a more remunerative employment, selling the cloak to me for a shilling. It has been in my possession for eighteen years now.

"My funny little hat was purchased in Berlin before the war. This particular style was considered the *dernier cri* in that country, and my agent, who was out there at the time, sent one home to me. It proved a great success when I first wore it—but you can imagine my surprise, on leaving the theatre, to find that a German artiste who was on the same bill was wearing in the street a hat of identical shape, with the firm conviction that he was the smartest man in town. I don't think he liked me after that."

JACK PLEASANTS.

"Inimitable" is a somewhat hackneyed expression, but no better word can be applied to describe the quaint personality, the sunny smile, and the droll expressions of May Moore Duprez, the original "Jolly Dutch Girl."

"I was born in America," said Miss Duprez. "From my babyhood days I seemed to take naturally to mimicry, and was never happier than

when entertaining a room full of people. I remember being greatly impressed by the Dutch people who lived near my home, and I used to imitate the funny way in which they talked, and the peculiarly clumsy manner in which they stood. One of them, in particular, was pigeon-toed, and since I have imitated him in my performance, several people seem to have gathered the impression that it is a national characteristic of the Dutch to stand with the toes turned inwards!

"I went on the stage at the age of seven, and soon afterwards I came to England as a Dutch comedienne. Originally, I merely sang a song, finishing with a clog-dance (what a novelty my sabots were to the public in those days!), but one evening I felt particularly 'fresh' and happened to address a little remark to a member of the orchestra. To my surprise he replied, and a lively dialogue ensued, which the audience seemed to enjoy immensely—so I have made it a rule to have a little chat with one of the musicians ever since.

"Another little stage trick which I originated quite by accident was that of laughing. At one time it was considered bad form to laugh at one's own jokes, but during one performance I happened to make an impromptu remark which was as

HARRY WELDON.

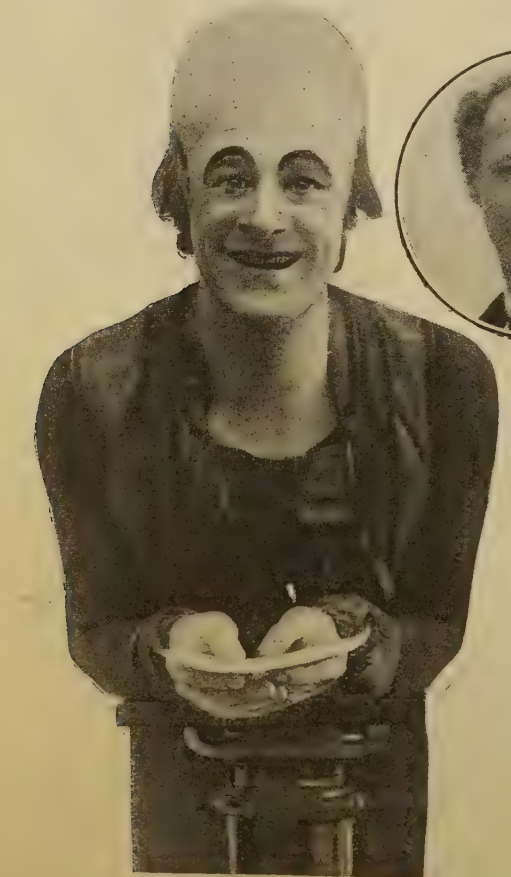
MAY MOORE DUPREZ.

unexpected to me as to the rest of the audience —with the result that I found myself laughing at what I had just said. The audience seemed to catch the spirit of my laughter, and since that evening I have not considered it a crime to make others laugh by laughing myself."

The truth of the saying that "it takes a clever man to make a fool" is emphasized by the performance of Harry Weldon. Beneath the surface of his inconsequential clowning there lurks a subtle note of burlesque, which the public—as well as those good-natured fellow-artistes who are the victims of his satires—are quick to appreciate.

"The idea of my particular style of clowning came to me quite accidentally," Mr. Weldon admitted when interviewed in his dressing-room. "I was singing a comic song when I noticed that a certain well-known artiste was standing in the wings. Feeling in a playful mood, I decided to 'pull his leg,' so I imitated one of his characteristic movements. To my surprise the audience were very quick to recognize the motive of this little bit of burlesque, and greeted the movement with a roar of laughter. From that day I gradually introduced fresh 'business,' and even now if I see anything on the stage that tickles my sense of humour, I simply can't keep it to myself—so it comes out when the audience least expect it.

"My favourite creation, however, is the character of 'Stiffy the Goalkeeper,' which originated from quite another source. I was playing with Fred Karno's company in a burlesque 'Football Match' some years ago—Charlie Chaplin was in the same show—and I was picked to play centre-forward. My brother happened to say to me: 'Why don't you try goalkeeper, Harry? You would look a stiff,' and in a flash the idea for 'Stiffy the Goalkeeper' was born. The character was built upon a careful study of those mannerisms that are peculiar to goalkeepers, as, for example, the little trick of kicking the toes of their boots or of fidgeting with their gloves. Watch one of them next time you go to a football match, and you will see that 'Stiffy' is really true to life."



"CARLTON."

"Carlton," the famous comedy card manipulator and spoof illusionist, tried everything from street-corner conjuring to performing the Maskelyne and Cook "box trick" as a side-show at fairs, before he obtained his first regular engagement upon the stage. It was at the Crystal Palace that he first adopted his present make-up.

"In those days," he says, "the majority of conjurers appeared in evening dress, and when I discovered that the public were openly suspicious of this attire, and were suggesting that the performer had 'something up his sleeve,' I decided to dress myself in black tights, so that everybody could see for himself that concealment was impossible.

"When I went on to give my first performance in this costume a roar of laughter greeted my appearance, and I began to fear for the success of my show. The laughter seemed to increase in volume as the performance progressed, and although I managed to struggle through without breaking down, I left the stage under the impression that I had failed in my efforts as a conjurer and succeeded only in making a laughing-stock of myself. However, the burst of applause that followed my exit soon removed this impression, and when Charlie Coborn, who was singing 'Two Lovely Black Eyes' at the same hall, came and congratulated me upon my funny make-up, I deemed it wise to

let well alone. Being over six feet in height, I afterwards decided to emphasize my lanky appearance by the addition of "elevators" and a high, padded wig—which brought my total length to just over seven feet.

"That is how the make-up which I had invented in all seriousness became the stock-in-trade of a comedy conjurer, earning for me the sobriquet 'The Human Hairpin'—though, if the truth be told, the apparent slimness of my figure is only another of my deceptions, for I span forty-one and a half inches round the waist, and my chest measurement is half an inch more than that of Joe Beckett."

The jovial son of the soil depicted upon this page is a characteristic study of Mr. Jay Laurier, one of the first comedians to enlighten the great British public as to the habits of flies in the winter time. Mr. Laurier commenced his theatrical career upon the legitimate stage, and it was quite by accident that his ability as a comedian asserted itself.

"I was playing the part of the handsome hero—or, in professional parlance, 'juvenile lead'—in one of those old-fashioned machine-made melodramas," says Mr. Laurier. "It was so full of what the Americans call 'sob-stuff' that the author decided to put on a comedian before the 'front cloth,' between scenes, just to cheer the audience up a bit. One evening the comedian fell ill, and I was called upon to play his part in addition to my own. Imagine the strain of disguising myself and my voice in order to avoid detection. In one scene I had to leave my dying child in the green limelight, rush into the wings and tear off my false moustache (a few weeks of this resulted in a swollen lip), put on an old pair of trousers, a ginger wig and a turned-up nose, and then rush on again and endeavour to transform tears into laughter. However, it seems that I was better suited to play the village idiot than the hero, for from that day I remained a comedian—and the *retroussé* nose which I still affect is a remnant of that original make-up.

JAY LAURIER.

"The origin of my present stage clothes takes me back to a certain pantomime in which I once played. I think it was 'Sindbad the Sailor,' but anyhow there was the usual scene in which the whole caste were wrecked on a desert island and appeared very much the worse for wear—excepting, of course, the principal boy. For this scene I had a suit made from an old sugar sack, which seemed to cause much amusement. A considerable time later I had returned to the music-halls, and was singing a yokel song called 'Silly Billy.' I arrived at the hall one evening and was about to make-up when I discovered that the trousers which I usually wore for this character were missing. I hunted high and low without success, and when the call boy knocked at my door and announced that I was due to appear in five minutes I had almost decided, in sheer desperation, to go on in my ordinary street trousers—which, seeing that I had just been to a wedding, were nicely creased, and hardly in keeping with a comedy make-up—when I suddenly remembered that I might have the remnants of my

pantomime clothes in the bottom of my property basket. To my great joy I found the sugar-bag trousers, slipped them on, and rushed on to the stage just in time, without even bothering to put on my smock and kerchief. The audience seemed immensely tickled, and the trousers of sacking have been my stock-in-trade ever since. I do not know to this day where the original trousers went to, but since their disappearance was a blessing in disguise, I don't think I shall trouble to find out."

Sir Harry Lauder, the world-famous Scotch comedian, who recently returned from abroad, sends us the following :—

"Practically every 'character' song I have produced since I first made a London success with 'Stop Yer Ticklin', Jock'—what a dreadfully long time ago it now seems to me!—has been built up on lines suggested to me by seeing some extraordinary person somewhere some when.

"It would be quite untrue to say that my character studies have all been absolutely true to life so far as the dressing of the parts is concerned. You seldom see, even in the Highlands of Scotland, such a personality as the figure I cut on the stage while singing 'I Love a Lassie.' In that song I attire myself as a dandified sort of Highlander. While there is nothing definitely wrong with the dressing, it is exaggerated for stage purposes. I make this explanation because I have often been asked if all my costumes are 'true to life.'

"In quite a number of my character songs, however, I have with strict faithfulness portrayed types which have actually been seen. For instance, I used to sing a sailor song called 'We Parted on the Shore.' My get-up for this song was copied meticulously from the garb of an old Arbroath fisherman. I actually went to this old fellow and offered him a sovereign for the old pair of sea-boots he wore because, after trying to get a similar pair in many places, I failed completely.

"'Doughy, the Baker,' as I represent him on the stage, had his prototype in a Glasgow suburb, and the character costume for 'I'm Fou the Noo,' literally came off the back of a neighbour of ours in the same city. He was a most excellent fellow, but when he got a 'drappie ower muckle,' he was as nearly as possible the type I represent in this old and very popular song.

"Many of the garments I use for my different make-ups have quite an interesting history. The old busby I wear in one or two of my soldier songs was worn at the Crimea by an old Newcastle warrior. He brought it to me one night at Newcastle and wanted to make me a present of it. I purchased it from him, and it has now travelled hundreds of thousands of miles with me. My collection of crooked sticks is, I should say, unique in the world. They have been sent me from all parts of Scotland, and one I treasure very much came from the King's forest in Braemar.

"All my caps, bonnets, plaids, kilts, sporrans, have interesting associations, but it would take too much space to describe their individual histories. Many of my stage garments I have worn for years and years and years; they have been patched and darned and 'faked' so much that I am afraid little of the original 'parts' remain."

HARRY LAUDER.

Photographs by: Hana, Bacon, Rona, Fielding, Dobson, and Arbuthnot.

The TIGER'S JAWS

By L. J. BEESTON

ILLUSTRATED BY E. G. OAKDALE

"WHENEVER I hear mention of the Hotel Sumptuous, in Piccadilly, as I did just now," said Storer, "there rises before me a keen mental photograph of Room 333, and the queer thing I saw there."

"Good! We must hear all about that, Storer," said his host, going round the table with a box of cigars.

The seven men in the dining-room of a Wimpole Street house all looked at Storer expectantly.

"I noticed when I named the Hotel Sumptuous," said a big man with a convex shirt-front, "that you threw up your head as if hit by a powerful reflection. Thank you, do you mind if I keep to my own cigars? They are as strong as they are black, and they are incidentally killing me; but that is my trouble."

"Right-o!" The host snapped down the cedar-wood top and dropped into his chair at the head of the table. "Go ahead, Storer," he begged.

"The mystery began with three lines in an unsigned letter," started the narrator. "The communication entreated me, in a most earnest manner, to be at Room 333, at the Sumptuous, at ten o'clock on a certain night in November. Of course my curiosity was fired. Anyone's curiosity would have been fired. So I went.

"As I was shown into the room I saw two men there whom I at once recognized. Their names were Hanlon and Baley. Also, it was evident from their constrained look and movements that they were there without knowing why; in short, both had received an entreating invitation similar to mine. This pleased neither them nor me. I had unconsciously anticipated something strictly personal and private, and my conceit got jarred accordingly. However, we chatted together and wondered what the deuce was on foot.

"During the next ten minutes three other men were shown into the room. Their names were Howis, Bell, and Mansford, and we were all very well acquainted. It was amusing to see the look of slightly-disgusted surprise on the face of each visitor as he made his appearance. But that sort of feeling quickly passed off, and we endeavoured to guess the reason which had caused the mysterious invitation to be sent to each of us.

"'Anything in the nature of the delicately-charming seems ruled out by an over-plus of the masculine element,' said Hanlon, ruefully.

"'A suspicion that we are being hoaxed tingles down my backbone,' ventured Howis.

"'I don't know; I shouldn't like to say that,' dissented Mansford, thoughtfully. 'There may be something deep here. It has dawned upon me that the six of us were all together on a previous occasion. I allude to a week-end which we spent, about two years ago, at Sir Hugo Parly's place at Wendover, in Bucks, and which is burnt into our memory by a certain deplorable event.'

"'Ah, but there were eight of us, including Sir Hugo,' Baley corrected.

"'True; but Parly is abroad,' answered Mansford, 'and as for the other man—Wayridge—why, we all know where *he* is. I cannot help thinking that our being called together in this strange fashion may be connected with that astonishing affair at which I hinted, and——'

"'Your surmise is a perfectly correct one,' said a deep and troubled voice which made us all start.

"As we spun round we saw a man standing

"As we spun round we saw a man standing at an inner door which had been concealed him since our

at an inner door which had been concealed by a tapestry curtain. We recognized him at once, though suffering had sadly marked him since our last meeting. He was Hugh Wayridge.

"His fine features had the pallor of one who has dwelt a long time in the dark. And so, in a manner, he had; in a most terrible darkness. My last glimpse of him had been when he was led from the dock, sentenced to two years of imprisonment.

"We stared at him, and we looked at one another, and we coughed, and Mansford and Bell edged towards the door.

"'I implore you not to go away, gentlemen,' interrupted Wayridge, with emotion. 'I have brought you here by a trick; but I ask you in God's name to forgive me, because I have something to say to you, and I could think of no other means of getting you together to listen to me.'

"Mansford and Bell came back when they saw that the rest remained still. Wayridge closed the door, then crossed the room to the fireplace, and holding a corner of the mantelpiece, with his strong face averted, he again broke a silence which no one present had cared to interrupt.

"'I want to tell you why I have been in prison,' he said, gulping once or twice. 'That must sound strange to you, since you were witnesses of my shame—my crime. You are aware that I was convicted of an abominable theft; that I stole from a man, while I was enjoying his hospitality, a jewel of great price. You saw it in my hands. I confessed

by a tapestry curtain. We recognized him at once, though suffering had sadly marked last meeting."

it at the time; I pleaded guilty at my trial. And yet, believe me if you can, that was not the true reason why I went to prison, why I became an outcast. I am going to tell you that reason, which is so strange that you will almost certainly not believe me. Nevertheless, I must speak.

"'The beginning, of course, was at our week-end at Sir Hugo Parly's house at Wendover. I entered that house a strong man, in perfect health; I appeared to find our brief stay as congenial as you did; and yet the chances of my ever leaving the place alive were about two in a hundred. I was as doomed as a spy who faces, blindfolded, a platoon of crack shots.

"'For three years I had known fear, and for a month, terror. I do not mean to be mysterious. It is a situation easily understood, though unusual. When I was a young man I had allied myself to one of those secret, those rodent, societies which burrow in the under-world, and which are frequently the true and unsuspected cause of big upheavals. I am prepared, whenever you wish, to give you all particulars; but at present I must confine myself to the events of one night.

"'Briefly, I had extricated myself from the fraternity three years before. Its methods had become too alarming for me. But my act of withdrawal had compromised me with them, and I was marked down as one whose life must be brushed aside as easily as we flick away a cobweb.

"'I went to the Antipodes to hide myself,

and for nearly two years I was successful. Then they found me. An escape from a great personal danger, which in normal circumstances would not have aroused my suspicions, made me feel apprehensive. It was followed almost immediately by another. The cold shadow of death passed within an inch of me. I knew, then, that the Society of the Flail—so they called themselves—had found me, and I fled.

" 'For months I lived on the brink of the grave. Will you try to understand what that means? Again and again I saved myself by using the utmost vigilance; but I felt sure, right down in my heart, that my days were numbered. I could not shake off my relentless enemies, who followed me in secret, and struck in stealth. Eventually I returned to England.

" 'But my nerve was gone. One may bear up and fortify one's spirit against the advance of a fatal disease; but when the sword of murder hangs over one's head it is different. Each night I dreamed of strangling hands round my throat. A sharp sound by day made me think of a pistol shot. When I was suddenly accosted by an acquaintance I would cry out and shrink back. Such a condition of things could not last.

" 'Finally I received an anonymous note. The writer claimed—though he may have lied—that hitherto my sworn foes, of whom he was one, had been only playing with me, and that the real blow was about to fall. An invitation to Sir Hugo Parly's house, which I had accepted, was mentioned in the unsigned letter; and it closed with the assurance that I should meet my death during the visit.

" 'And I knew perfectly well that I should. The Flail does not boast. My last hours had arrived.

" 'Police protection? I had already tried it, and in vain. I might have kept away from the Wendover house? It would have been utterly useless.

" 'I went, therefore, and knowing that I should never return. The Saturday passed off and nothing happened. The Sunday crept away. When I retired to my room that night I felt on the verge of mental collapse. And a longing to tell someone of my terrible situation became so strong that I yielded to it. I went to the room of one of my fellow-guests, and I—I told him all. He is here now, and he must remember.'

"AS Wayridge paused we all looked at one another. After a short silence Hanlon cleared his throat and spoke.

" 'That is quite true,' said he. 'You came to my room, Wayridge. You told me that you were in deadly fear. Mingled with your very real terror was a certain shame of it, and you asked me to respect your secret. I did so.'

" 'Principally because you did not altogether believe me,' said Wayridge, heavily. 'I could tell, from your manner, that you thought I was suffering from a nervous complaint.'

" 'Yes, I did think that,' agreed Hanlon.

" 'But you were wrong,' said Wayridge, gloomily. 'It did not matter, however; you could not have helped me. I left you, and I returned to my own room.

" 'I locked my door; I saw that my window was secured. I made a careful examination of my room. But in spite of these precautions I could not dismiss a heart-chilling instinct that I should be murdered before the morning.

" 'I did not undress. The hours crawled by. My sufferings increased—the accumulated suffering of a twelvemonth of dreadful expectation. My hearing was strained to catch the slightest sound. Between two and three o'clock I heard a click downstairs as if a window-bolt had been forced back!

" 'To me that noise was as the footfall of death. Blame me for cowardice if you will. I simply could not help it. Someone had entered the house, and it was for my life that he had come.' "

At this point in his tale Storer paused to finish his wine, for he was a trifle husky. Also he noted that he had the absorbed attention of the company, and he knew the value of a halt at a critical juncture. The cigars round the dining-table glowed strongly, and a heavy, oily smoke hung over the man who was shortening his days with his black weeds.

"I shall not readily forget Wayridge's emotion as he unfolded to us the events of that night," continued Storer. "He need not have laboured to make us understand what he had passed through, for vivid recollection of the ordeal paled his wasted cheeks, and beaded his forehead with perspiration.

" 'I waited in my room, scarcely daring to breathe,' went on Wayridge. 'Several minutes passed, but not the faintest sound succeeded that other. Nevertheless, I was absolutely certain that I had heard the sharp click of a window-fastener which had suddenly yielded. At length, unable to bear the suspense any longer, I opened my door. There was no one outside. I stepped to the head of the staircase and listened again. After a minute or two I caught an almost inaudible sound of someone moving in a room below.

" 'I did not stir. I was sure that he would come up, and I had made up my mind to spring upon him in the dark, as he climbed the stairs. But he did not come. Slight

noises were now frequent, and at last I resolved to go down.

"'I descended the stairs with infinite caution. I reached the door of the room in which I was assured an intruder was lurking. But he did not emerge, and I took hold of the handle of the door. It turned without making a sound, and I peered in.

"'A single glance showed me that I had made a mistake. I saw, not an assassin, but a common thief. He had switched on the electric light and was most clearly revealed. He did not see me, for his back was towards me. To the right was the open window through which he had entered. He was kneeling before a small safe, which he had obviously succeeded in forcing. From it he had taken a jewel-box, and when I first saw him he was lifting out a rope of pearls—the well-known pearls of Lady Parly.

"'As I took a step forward, perhaps incautiously, a board creaked under my foot. He turned his head, gave me one glimpse of his staring eyeballs, and without an instant's pause he rushed to the window. It was lightning-like. One moment he was stooping before me, the next he had vanished. I leaped to the window, and I saw the string of pearls lying across it, dropped by the fellow in his flight. I picked it up, uncertain for a second whether to follow, and in that luckless moment Sir Hugo, followed by you, Howis, and Hanlon close behind, rushed into the room. The same slight sounds which had disturbed me had disturbed them, and had drawn them to the spot.

"'Sir Hugo Parly roared out "Here he is, by Heaven!" Then he pulled himself up abruptly, for he recognized me.

"'And I, gentlemen, saw the suspicion leap into his eyes. Well it might! There was the open safe, the pearls were clenched in my hand, and I had one leg across the open window.

"'I had but a second in which to act. An immediate repudiation of the terrible suspicion looking from every pair of eyes fixed upon me, an instant explanation, would have saved me. But I did not make it. Why?

"'Because in that supreme moment an idea passed like a flame of fire through my brain. I saw the gates of a prison open to me. I might escape them; I *could* escape them, and by a word. But if I did, I was a dead man. A prison? Why, in that instant of time, when thoughts went roaring like a tempest through my head, I realized that the secure confines of a cell would surely and absolutely shelter me from those enemies who had made each day a torment which I would give anything to annihilate. The long knife of an assassin would never pierce the stone walls of a dungeon. To me they would prove a certain refuge—a salvation.

"'To tell you of this strange, this bizarre inspiration occupies an appreciable time; but it presented itself to my tortured senses with the swiftness of light. Remember, I had got to act with the quickness of a man whose head is in the tiger's jaws, and who feels those jaws closing.

"'I made my choice. I tossed the pearls at the feet of Sir Hugo Parly. "I have lost," I said, grimly, "and I must take the consequences of it."

"'You know what those consequences were, gentlemen. I received a sentence of two years' imprisonment. The thief might have left traces of himself, but in the circumstances no one dreamed of looking for any such thing. Yet I was as innocent as yourselves of the crime for which I was convicted.

"'Do I regret my decision? I do not. I am convinced that it kept me on the right side of a grave. The question which confronts me now is—can you accept my story?

"'I dare not hope that you will. The situation I have described must seem to you so unusual as to be almost fantastic. Yet my future rests upon your verdict; it is for you to decide if I am to know a relative happiness, or to be extinguished.'

. . . . . .

"As Wayridge concluded his story he lifted his haggard eyes and looked at us steadily for the first time. What he saw in our faces did not encourage him to hope.

"'I am asking a big thing of you,' he went on, wearily. 'I want reinstatement among decent men and women. This you can give me by accepting the facts which I have placed before you. Your position and your influence can remove the brand of felon which marks me. God knows I need friends! God knows I have done nothing to lose them!'

"We still remained silent, each furtively glancing at the other. What we had heard was so extraordinary!

"'I see that I am not generally believed,' said Wayridge, a circle of crimson burning in the wasted hollows of his cheeks. 'I am bound to admit that I did not entertain much hope of convincing you. If I stood where you are I should probably share your incredulity.'

"Mansford was the first amongst us to break the silence. He said, blurtingly:—

"'Are we to assume, now that you are discharged, that you are still menaced by this secret society?'

"'The Society of the Flail, having its headquarters at Warsaw, was rooted out and practically exterminated fifteen months ago,' replied Wayridge, eagerly and anxiously.

'I read the news in one of the newspapers, in the prison library. It was up-rooted as a body. Most of its individual members still exist, I suppose; but they are not to be feared by me, the organization being destroyed.'

"'I seem to remember reading about it myself,' said Howis.

"'I think you will agree with me, gentlemen,' spoke out Baley, turning to us, 'that any judgment we may pass upon this matter must be influenced by the evidence of Hanlon, whom Wayridge took into his confidence an hour or two before the outrage at Sir Hugo Parly's house. You admitted, Hanlon, did you not, that Wayridge told you that he feared he would be murdered before the morning?'

"'Oh, yes, he told me all about that matter,' assented Hanlon, dryly.

"'But you did not think fit to mention it at Wayridge's trial?' continued Baley.

"'Certainly not,' answered Hanlon, in the same dry tone. 'Wayridge's story of taking guilt upon himself to save his skin did not occur to me. And if it had, I should have rendered him doubtful service by speaking.'

"'Possibly, at the time, you concluded that Wayridge had invented what he told you?' pressed Baley. 'You were annoyed with him for trying to throw dust in your eyes, as it were? You, in short, had not the least doubt of his trying to steal Lady Parly's pearls?'

"'No; and I see no reason for changing my opinion now,' said Hanlon, coolly.

"At those words Wayridge lifted his head, hesitated a moment, then walked towards the door. Wheeling round he faced us with a sudden air of resolution which lighted up his worn face like a flame.

"'Wait!' he called out, sharply and clearly. 'I hoped that you might accept my story without my bringing a painful truth as its witness. But I see the necessity of my proving it, and I will hesitate no longer. The Society of the Flail marked each of its members, upon the palm of the right hand, with a representation of the instrument of which it bore the name—a Flail.

"'You think that the peril which threatened me was not sufficient to drive me into a prison for shelter? You doubt that part of my story? Then I will show you how imminent it was, how sickeningly real. When Hanlon, there, amongst others, rushed into the room and found me apparently escaping with the necklace, he threw up his right hand in surprise; and I saw, on its palm, the dreaded mark of the Flail! God above! The agent of the Society, the man sent to kill me, was one of yourselves!'

"As a gasp of astonishment left our lips, Hanlon cried out: 'That's an infernal lie!' Then he rushed to the door.

"It was a lightning dash, but not quick enough to beat Wayridge. He caught Hanlon's right arm and twisted it so that the other screamed aloud. Wayridge forced it up, wrenching aside the fingers; and we all saw, black and sinister upon the white skin of the palm, the mark of the Flail!

"Before one of us could move, before we could recover from the shock of that dramatic *dénouement*, Hanlon tore himself loose, dashed through the open door, and vanished!

"As for poor Wayridge, that climax to his sufferings overcame him utterly. He went to pieces all at once. It is not nice to hear a strong man sobbing his heart out. Poor, poor devil."

STORER had finished his tale. He filled his glass. "That is why I remember Room 333 at the Hotel Sumptuous," he added.

"And you have excellent reason," said a listener, when the murmur of applause had subsided. "I envy you the adventure."

"And you all put Wayridge back into his proper niche in society?" said another auditor.

"We saw him thoroughly righted," answered Storer, gladly.

"And, of course, that he—Wayridge—having been one of the Flail, bore the mark upon *his* right palm, also?" questioned, carelessly, the man with the black cigar.

"I did not examine him personally," said Storer, coldly.

"No? And did you ever hunt up Hanlon, afterwards, to see if the mark on his palm was indelible, and that it had not been put there, shall we say, for one night only?"

"Excuse me, sir, but you seem to possess a sceptical disposition," answered Storer, with asperity.

"Oh, I do, I do!" agreed the other, with enthusiasm.

"Then may I ask what the devil you are driving at?"

"Yes, tell him! Tell him!" shouted everybody.

The other removed his terrible cigar and waved it gracefully. "Willingly, when I have asked him two questions," said he. "One: did you and your friends, Storer, make any kind of money collection for Wayridge?"

"We assisted him financially—yes," was the irritated answer. "Substantially assisted him."

"Ah! Two: can you recall any subsequent theft of valuable jewels occurring in the circle of your friends? The kind of daring haul, for instance, which might have been effected by a smart crook whom you had

"Wayridge forced Hanlon's right arm up, wrenching aside the fingers: and we all saw upon the palm the mark of the Flail!"

all taken to your arms, and so given him plenty of opportunity?"

Storer, red in the face, half rose from his chair, then sat down again. "I will not allow the insinuation," he spluttered. "True, a few weeks later, Mansford was robbed of a piece of presentation gold plate——"

"Ah!" interrupted the other, delightedly, "I thought so. Why, I know your Wayridge, and I know your Hanlon! The Society of the Flail did exist, but I'll swear that neither Wayridge nor Hanlon ever had anything to do with it. They are a couple of gilt-edged jewel crooks, working together; a couple of so-called gentlemen jewel thieves, who have edged themselves into decent society! You may take it as absolutely certain that they had managed to get an invitation to Sir Hugo Parly's with the intention of stealing Lady Parly's pearl necklace. Wayridge went downstairs and opened the safe. Probably Hanlon was with him; but, if so, Hanlon contrived to get out before the interruption. Wayridge's tale of finding a burglar there was a pure invention. The only thieves in the house that night were himself and Hanlon. He really was caught in the act of jewel-lifting by Sir Hugo Parly and the rest, and he deserved the two years he got for it. He invented the burglar part of the story, and he invented the yarn about his being threatened by the Flail, with a view to making you and your friends, met together in Room 333, believe that he was an innocent man. He arranged that scene, he and Hanlon. They acted it to the very life, apparently. Why? Because he wanted to get into a good set again, he wanted the substantial collection, and future opportunities of robbing you. Listen! I met both of them—close pals—not so very long ago, at the gaming tables at Monte. Perhaps they were playing with the proceeds of your friend Mansford's piece of gold plate! A couple of crooks of the first magnitude. A couple of deep-swimming sharks!"

The loud hum of sensation which rose from the excited listeners was cut short by Storer banging his fist upon the table.

"Dammit, sir, you have spoilt a good story!" he shouted.

"Dammit, sir," beamed the other, "I have made it! What?"

ACROSTICS.

DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 87.

(The Third of the Series.)

ONE virtue is content to wait and see;
The other says, "The lowest room for me."

1. Cross, sulky, irritable, ill at ease,
Angry, resentful, surly, hard to please.

2. When Europe trembled at Napoleon's frown,
He won a marshal's baton, and renown.

3. I beat my boy: if double he become,
I find I'm beating a barbaric drum.

4. Go where the rainbow ends, the end remove,
And that you are a Latin scholar prove.

5. In water-colours do you paint, or oils?
This is inseparable from your toils.

6. If knowledge of the Hebrew tongue we claim,
With wrestling we associate his name.

7. Change it repeatedly, if you prefer:
But turn it, and you lose your character.

8. "Thrift, thrift, Horatio!" What she did bake
For funeral feast became the wedding-cake.

KING COLE.

Answers to Acrostic No. 87 should be addressed to the Acrostic Editor, THE STRAND MAGAZINE, Southampton Street, Strand, London, W.C.2, and must arrive not later than by the first post on October 9th.

To every light one alternative answer may be sent; it should be written at the side. At the foot of his answer every solver should write his pseudonym and nothing else.

ANSWER TO No. 86.

1.	S	ucces	S
2.	I	nc	H
3.	X	plic	I
4.	P	ee	L
5.	E	e	L
6.	N	ob	I
7.	C	row	N
8.	E	alin	G

NOTES.—Light 1. Nothing succeeds like success. 3. Explicit. 4. Sir Robert Peel. Do ye ken John Peel? 6. Nobility. 8. Ale, gin.

In No. 83 "Wall" answers the third light, the town being Muro; the acceptance of the word does not affect the result of the competition. For the sixth light of No. 84 several solvers sent "Proctor"; this was not Barry Cornwall's name, and it is quite a different word. Tarty disqualified himself by not conforming to our rule that asks for name and address with the final solution.

RESULT OF THE FOURTEENTH SERIES.

Only one solver, Pebble, succeeded in solving every acrostic completely, and she wins the first prize of three guineas. Nine competitors who failed in one light win prizes of a guinea each; they are Beggar, Crotal, Deen, Flapper, Franz, Manora, Reg, Somerford, and Yoko. All these ten winners will be ineligible for prizes in the fifteenth series, now running.

The successful solvers are: Pebble, Miss A. M. Stoneman, The Park School, Preston, Lancs; Beggar, Mr. B. G. Pearce, 5, Ethelbert Road, Bromley, Kent; Crotal, Miss G. W. Hughes, Brier Hill House, Northampton; Deen, Mr. J. Mulhall, Castlecomer, Co. Kilkenny, Ireland; Flapper, Mr. J. Charrington, Shenley Grange, Herts; Franz, Lady Young, Oak Lea, Silverhill, St. Leonards-on-Sea; Manora, Mr. G. W. Sealy, 19, Redcliffe Gardens, S.W.10; Reg, Mr. H. Lees, 3, Campden House Chambers, W.8; Somerford, Mrs. Roper Tyler, Barton House, Tetbury, Glos; Yoko, Mr. F. Rawson, 10, Richmond Mansions, London, S.W.10.

Queer Company in the Abbey

by HAYDEN CHURCH

At this moment, when there is a proposal for the restoration of Westminster Abbey and also another for the removal of certain London statues, it is opportune to point out that there is only space in Westminster Abbey for six more tombs. Yet there lie the bones of an astonishing collection of nonentities, including a plumber, a butler, a prize-fighter, and a would-be murderer. Would not the right thing be to remove some of these, to find space for the truly great and famous?

IN Westminster Abbey, the great Valhalla of the Anglo-Saxon race, there is room for the remains of only six more famous people. And even they must be cremated before they can be interred!

Such was the statement made recently by Canon R. H. Charles, of Westminster Abbey, regarding a suggestion that the supposed bones of St. George, England's patron saint, unearthed beneath the mosaic floor of a church in Palestine, should be sent to London and buried in some corner of Westminster.

It has since been shown fairly conclusively that the bones thus found cannot be those of St. George, but whether they are or not, the fact remains that, unless they are reduced to ashes, there is no room for them, or for those of any other great man or woman in the "Holy Field of the British Empire," as the late Sir Walter Besant termed the Abbey.

When interviewed regarding the proposal to re-inter the supposed bones of St. George in the Abbey, Canon Charles said:—

"You see those old houses behind that Norman wall there?" He pointed to the garden behind his house in the little cloisters. "Well, they will have to come down some day, and I want that space reserved for the interment of the remains of the famous living and the great men of the future. There are so many great men nowadays, and there will be so many in the days to come, that space for six seems inadequate."

"Seems inadequate" is certainly not overstating the case. As for the Canon's scheme, the objections to it are obvious, the principal one being that it is a project for "some day," probably a considerably distant one. Meanwhile, what of the present? At any time some great national figure may die, so mighty a personality that the nation will demand that he or she be interred in the Abbey. Are the relatives of this great man or woman to be told that, unless he or she is cremated, it will be impossible to comply with the public will? And after the "funeral urns" of six such personages have been deposited in the Abbey, what then?

Once the fact is grasped by the people as a whole that there is actually no more room in Westminster Abbey for the bones of the great and famous, the force of public opinion may compel the Abbey authorities to do the obvious thing. And the obvious thing is to make space for national heroes and leaders—such, for example, as the late Nurse Cavell—by removing from the Abbey the bones of some, if not all, of the astonishing collection of nonentities, and worse than nonentities—including a would-be murderer, a swindler, and several other persons of evil repute—which occupy precious space and have been occupying it for centuries.

"I will not be buried in Westminster," said Sir Godfrey Kneller, the painter, as he lay dying, to his friend Pope; "they do bury fools there." It was in 1723 that Sir Godfrey delivered himself of this contemptuous opinion, and it is worth recalling now for the reason that it is largely because the Abbey contains so many bodies and monuments of those whose only claim to distinction

is the fact that their dust lies there, that entombment within its walls has to be denied to the truly celebrated of our day —such, for example, as Henry M. Stanley, the African explorer, whose claim to be numbered among England's great and heroic dead could not be disputed, but who, notwithstanding, was refused an Abbey burial.

A MOTLEY ASSEMBLAGE.

Canon Charles, in a letter to the writer, states that there is room in the Abbey for only four more memorials. All the more reason, then, for getting rid of some of those to "second and third rate celebrities" with which, as remarked by the Rev. William J. Loftie, one of the few writers on the Abbey who have dared to tell the truth about it, the national fane is crowded.

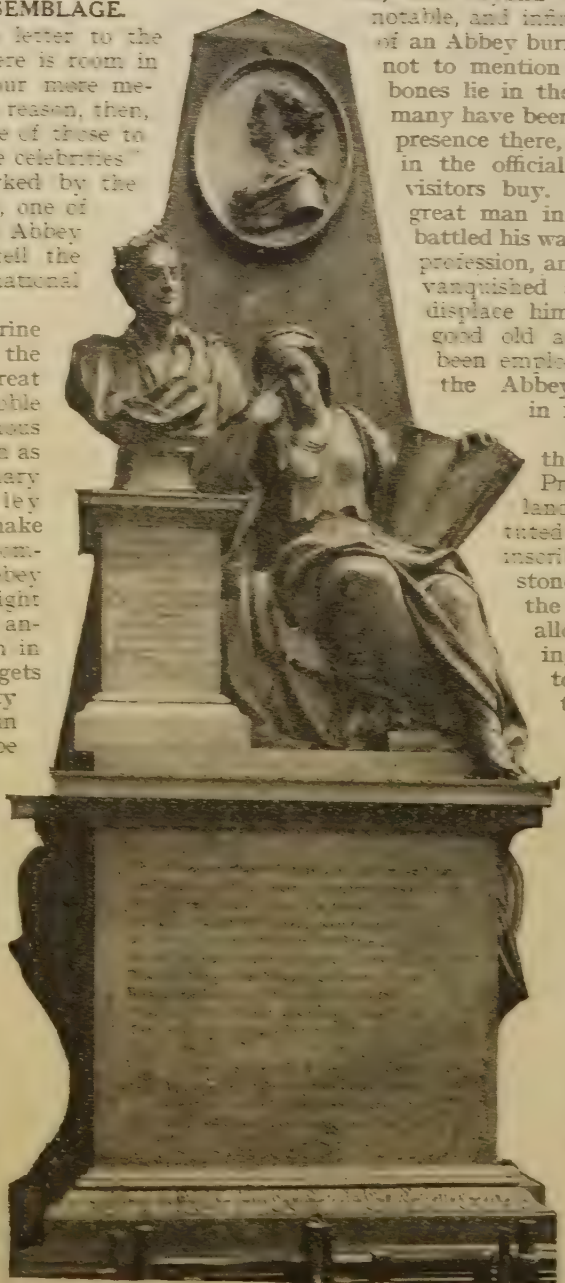
In this supposed shrine of the immortals meet the good and the bad, the great and the petty, the noble and the ignoble, the famous and the infamous, much as they do in any ordinary graveyard. A motley gathering it would make if the ghosts of those commemorated in the Abbey should assemble some night to take stock of one another! Unless sojourn in the other world begets much greater charity than is usually found in this, there would be much sniffing and tilting of distinguished phantom noses and disgusted exclamations of "How the deuce came you here?" Wilberforce might find himself hustled aside by a pugilist; Pitt might be moved to denounce a swindling Secretary of State; Wolfe might be confronted by a spy; Tennyson might find himself in the company of a writer of scurrilous verses.

Truth is always stranger than fiction. Arnold Bennett, in "Buried Alive," imagined a valet being laid to rest in the Abbey, but that was because he was mistaken for his master, a famous painter. A butler is actually buried in the Abbey as a butler, and there also we find a plumber, a laundress, and a poultry-keeper, as well as the prize-fighter already mentioned.

Of these persons the pugilist, John Broughton, was beyond compare the most notable, and infinitely more worthy of an Abbey burial than the others, not to mention many more whose bones lie in the great fane. Yet many have been scandalized by his presence there, which is mentioned in the official guide that most visitors buy. Broughton was a great man in his fashion. He battled his way to the top of his profession, and for several years vanquished all who sought to displace him. He attained a good old age, and had long been employed as a verger in the Abbey when he died in 1789.

He wanted to have the words "Champion Prize-Fighter of England," which constituted his claim to fame, inscribed on his tombstone, but the Dean of the Abbey would not allow this. Accordingly, on the tablet to his memory in the West Cloisters, Broughton is described merely as a "Yeoman of the Guard." When the time comes, as it must, when they will have to begin removing bones from the Abbey to make room for those actually entitled to burial there, honest John Broughton's should certainly not be the first to go.

A prize-fighter might be regarded as a national hero of sorts, but what of a plumber, and an obscure plumber at that?



The elaborate monument of Nicholas Rowe, a Poet Laureate but a complete nonentity.

The plumber who is buried in the Abbey, one Philip Clarke, is there for no more valid reason than that he saw to the drains and mended pipes for Westminster School. Yet one looks in vain in the Abbey for a memorial to that workman whose name will never die — the immortal tinker, John Bunyan, who gave us "Pilgrim's Progress."

A butler, also employed in Westminster School, Thomas Warren, was interred in one of the cloisters in 1699. By looking after Queen Anne's washing, with the title of "Mistress Starcher," and through marrying a "Page of the Back Stairs," one Elizabeth Abrahal obtained a similar posthumous distinction. So did David Davis, who had charge of Queen Anne's fowls, with a style of "First Groom of Her Majesty's Poultry Yard." This individual was buried in the ground consecrated to the great, together with several members of his family, including a six-year-old son. Nor is the honour accorded to that youngster unique. Many children were buried in the Abbey, and, so far as can be learned, not one of them was even precocious.

The memorial to Thomas Thynn, a would-be murderer, stands near that of the Wesleys!

The first child to be buried there, the five-year-old daughter of Henry III., was dumb. Being the child of a king, however, and a great king as things were regarded in those times, no criticism could be made of her interment there with her forbears. Likewise may be justified the burial in the Abbey of the little son of Henrietta Maria, the exiled queen of Charles I. But as regards most of the children in the Abbey it may be said that no one knows why they should lie there.

It seems abundantly clear that at one time what is now termed a "pull" could get almost anybody an Abbey burial. How else can one account for the presence of Thomas Smith, of whom nothing is known but the inscription on his tablet that "Through the spotted veil of smallpox he rendered a pure and unspotted soul to God." In the south aisle of the great nave is a monument to another Smith — John Smith — who died in 1718. He may have been a very worthy man — nobody knows — but if his family had not some influence with the Abbey authorities he never would have been thus rescued from oblivion. The Duke of Buckingham had a Scotchman buried in the Abbey for no other reason than that he was his friend. On the same day a lot of people got together and buried a dog in Tothill Fields as a protest against an Abbey funeral. But the Duke's friend still retains his resting-place there.

STRANGE FOLK IN "POETS' CORNER."

It is "Poets' Corner" that visitors approach with the greatest reverence, and there they linger longest. But no other part of the Abbey affords a more striking illustration of its incongruities—of the lack of any principle of selection by which the most deserving of remembrance might be admitted, and those who had no claim to enduring fame kept out. Addison long ago complained that here were

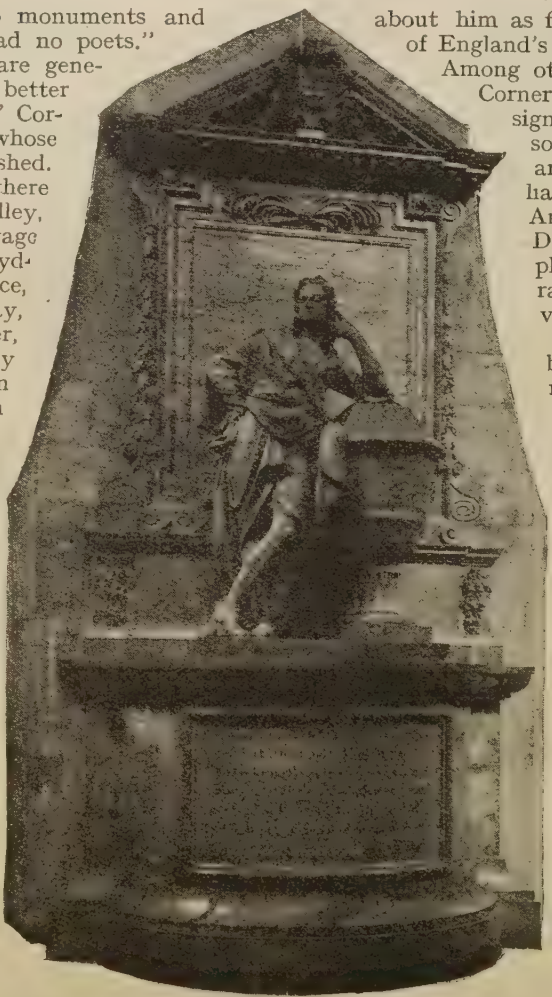
"poets who had no monuments and monuments which had no poets." Those whose works are generally forgotten are better represented in Poets' Corner than those whose writings are still cherished. No memorials exist there of Byron, Keats, Shelley, Moore, Walter Savage Landor, Sir Philip Sydney, Marlowe, Lovelace, Herrick, Allan Ramsay, Chatterton, Massinger, and others, deservedly far better known than many of those on whom monuments and fulsome epitaphs have been bestowed.

Although Thomas Shadwell, Poet Laureate in the reign of William III., according to Hallam, "endeavoured to make the stage as grossly immoral as his talents admitted," he has a monument in this hallowed shrine of the Muses. A student might pass a pretty stiff examination in English Literature and yet have read nothing written by Nicholas Rowe, the Poet Laureate of George I., and, according to his epitaph, composed by Pope, next to Shakespeare "skilled to draw the tender tear." On his monument in Poets' Corner his widow is depicted wiping the "tender tear" from one eye and gazing at his bust out of the other. For all that, she married again soon after he was buried. Michael Drayton, whose bust occupies a niche in this sacred spot, is now numbered among the well-nigh forgotten poets, despite the prediction made in his epitaph that "his name that cannot fade shall be an everlasting monument."

Under the medallion of John Gay appear his own cynical lines :—

> Life is a jest, and all things show it;
> I thought so once, and now I know it.

And they seem not altogether inappropriate, in view of his own presence in such a place and the strangely-mixed company gathered about him as fitting representatives of England's greatness.



The monument to James Craggs, Secretary of State, "an arrant rogue" associated with the South Sea Bubble.

Among other tenants of Poets' Corner who have been consigned to oblivion, or something much like it, are John Phillips, William Mason, Christopher Anstey, and Sir William Davenant, despite his plagiarized epitaph, "O rare Sir William Davenant."

It is a strange assemblage of the dead that mingles in this part of the Abbey. In it are found divines, philosophers, essayists, dramatists, actors, antiquarians, critics, architects, philanthropists, etc., most of them long forgotten. And among those who have left an enduring mark on English literature, incongruity still characterizes their commemoration. Thackeray, who was buried at Kensal Green, has a bust there, while his great rival, Dickens, is buried close by, with no monument save his gravestone. Dr. Samuel Johnson is buried here, but his monument is in St. Paul's Cathedral.

Others occupy conspicuous places who have no earthly claim to them. What, for instance, could be more inappropriate than a tablet above Chaucer's tomb to John Roberts, 'the very faithful secretary of the Honourable William Pelham," a Minister who held office under George II.? And when such men as Byron, Keats, and Shelley still remain unrecognized in the Abbey, why should room any longer be given to Thomas Chaffinch and John Osbaldiston, "Pages of the Bedchamber" to Charles II.?

THE ABBEY'S "ROGUES' GALLERY."

It would be unfair, perhaps, to describe the Abbey as containing a "Rogues' Gallery," but certainly there are buried and commemorated there those who may truly be described as candidates for one. So great a blackguard was Thomas Thynn, whose

memorial stands near that of the saintly Wesleys, the founders of Methodism, that a dean refused to be responsible for the striking discrepancy between historic fact and poetic fiction displayed in his epitaph and ordered it to be erased, while allowing his monument to remain. Thynn was a favourite of Charles II. He was a rich man, who, to add to his wealth, compelled the child widow of Lord Ogle, heiress to the vast Northumberland estates of the Percys, to marry him. She was only fifteen, and fled to Holland to escape him, whereupon he instituted law proceedings to get possession of her property.

One of her suitors, Count John Konigsmark, a Swedish nobleman, sent him a challenge by Captain Vratz, one of his followers. Thynn responded by dispatching six men to France to murder the pair of them. Their mission failed. Then the Count tried the game of murder with more success. As Thynn was riding down Pall Mall one Sunday evening his coach was stopped by Captain Vratz and two hired villains, and Thynn's career was terminated by a blunderbuss. A *bas relief* on the monument depicts the murder, and incidentally justifies the boast made by Thynn's coachman that he, too, had his effigy in the Abbey.

Hardly more savoury a character than Thynn was James Craggs, who was Secretary of State when he died in 1720, only thirty-two years old, and whose monument is in the baptistery of the national Valhalla. Pope composed the epitaph which commemorates his virtues :—

> Statesman, yet friend to truth! of soul sincere,
> In action faithful, and in honour clear;
> Who broke no promise, serv'd no private end,
> Who gained no title, and who lost no friend;
> Ennobled by himself, by all approv'd,
> Prais'd, wept and honoured by the Muse he lov'd.

Yet, when the South Sea Bubble burst and its books were overhauled, this same Craggs, "in honour clear," was discovered to be an arrant rogue, his name appearing in the subscription list for the fictitious sum of three hundred and thirty thousand pounds, the price of his "influence."

Pope had no desire to be buried in the Abbey himself. He knew very well the character of many of the company there and what epitaphs were worth.

A HODGE-PODGE OF MEMORIALS.

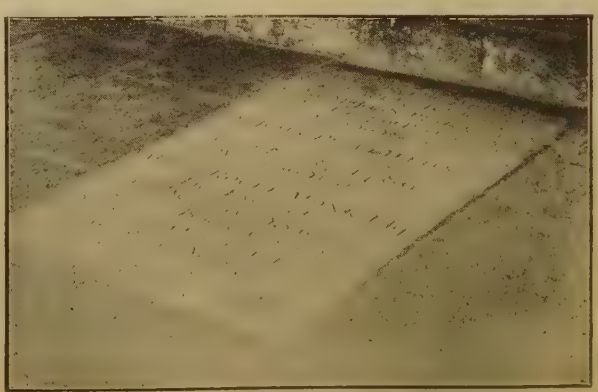
It is a singular fact that no painter is interred in the Abbey, for no other reason, apparently, than that successive deans had no appreciation of painting as a form of art.

Of ecclesiastical dignitaries and divines there are about four dozen commemorated, and no particular standard of greatness seems to have been applied in determining their fitness for such an exalted honour. The great majority of them have been connected with the Abbey.

Apart from actresses, great women have received the most scant recognition in the Abbey, though memorials have been bestowed on many of the sex there. Aphra Behn, the barber's daughter, perhaps has some claim to fame as the first woman to earn a living by her pen in England, though her licentiousness was notorious, and Charles II. made use of her as a spy.

Beside the great Sir Isaac Newton lies buried his "pretty but naughty" niece, as one writer on the Abbey describes her. After the death of Lord Halifax, who is said to have been her lover, and who, by the way, was also buried in the Abbey, she married John Conduitt, Master of the Mint, and both she and her husband are buried beside her famous uncle, Sir Isaac, in the middle aisle. With them also was interred the body of her daughter, Lady Lymington.

"When a great man dies," wrote Sir Walter Besant, "the Dean should remove the monument of one of the unknown to make room for the newcomer; in that way the Abbey would become more and more the Holy Field of the British Empire." This policy will have to be adopted soon. The Abbey has witnessed the exhumation of the bodies of great men. After the Restoration the bones of Cromwell, Ireton, and other notable leaders of the Commonwealth were taken from their graves and subjected to many indignities. Illegitimate descendants of Charles II. fill some of the places thus made vacant. Some day these latter may in turn be disinterred to make room for men of unsullied fame.



The grave of John Broughton, the pugilist, who wished to have the words "Champion Prize-fighter of England" inscribed on his tombstone.

The Bride's Waltz

By HOLWORTHY HALL

ILLUSTRATED BY STANLEY DAVIS

WHEN he was twenty-six, and his admirers began to call him a genius to his face, Iglesia used to shake his head with earnest humour and say, "Yes, but it is not my fault." This was because he had never quite forgiven his parents for what they had done to him.

He had been kind and generous to his parents while they lived, but there were two injuries for which they might never expect his pardon. He still cherished in his heart the unwarranted belief that, given equal opportunity, he would have proved as great a civil engineer as he was now a concert pianist. He was proud of his income and proud of his repute; but although these vanities often consoled him for the memory of his slavish boyhood, yet he continued to resent the arbitrariness with which music had been commanded for him and science forbidden. With all the obsession of genius, and without regard to his present glory, he still maintained that his parents should have offered him his choice.

As to the lesser injury, he was far more sensitive. When his parents had once fully come to the conclusion that their son ought to be a great musician, they decided that the most serious handicap he could have would be to possess a name that was purely English. The boy was eight years old; dark-eyed, dark-haired, even rather dark of complexion. He had never played in public; his talent was unheralded. So that very quietly, by deed poll, they had "Arthur Church" translated into Spanish. And this was beyond Iglesia's power to forgive.

At the time of the discovery of their son's talent the Churches lived in a very small town in Oxfordshire. As soon as the legal formalities were concluded concerning the changing of the name, the canny parents sailed for Spain. There was privation ahead, but there was also fulfilment.

By compulsion, and in company with his father and mother, the boy learned to read Spanish and to write it and speak it. Presently he began to think in Spanish as well, and to put quaint accents into his native tongue. He studied and progressed, and was "discovered." Then they all came back to England and settled in London; and Iglesia's parents were happy when they died.

For nearly a score years, then, he had lived under a name which he abominated. And yet his distinction was founded upon it, and he knew that the death of his parents made no difference. He could not tempt Fate, and the caprice of the public, by changing back. Sometimes he dreamed of Arthur Church, a civil engineer, and what Arthur Church would probably think about Arturo Iglesia, a temperamental pianist; and nothing but an exceptionally florid newspaper notice could ever drag him out of that particular mood. If he got the notice he could forget the engineering.

At twenty-six he began to compose a little; and on the day of his signing the publisher's contract for *Opus* 8, a tone-poem in B-flat minor, he had already received in royalties on the seven earlier works a trifle over six thousand pounds. He was becoming a standard composer, as well as a standard performer.

'And yet," said one critic to another, "he still lacks something. Both in his playing and his writing. Something *vital*. And it's the only thing that keeps him out of the very front rank, too."

The second critic nodded confirmation. "True. He's gone ahead too smoothly, and that is the answer. He hasn't had any troubles, and he hasn't been in love. He is just the least little bit—well, say apathetic. Give him time."

"Yes? What next?"

"Why, after he has gone through the fire," said the other critic, "we shall have to

re-classify the moderns. Paderewski first, Hofmann second, Iglesia third. But not until then."

Iglesia had been playing at a private musicale. When the last encore was accomplished he had risen, as usual, to stand by his hostess and suppress his boredom while a long train of guests saluted him with conscious smiles and still more conscious flattery. And Iglesia hated this. He liked flattery in print, especially if it were direct and straightforward, said what it had to say, and got over it; but he hated to be gushed at, or stammered at, or patronized; and so, in receiving strangers, he generally rested on his dignity, shook hands with emphasis, and kept himself as mentally aloof as possible.

TO-NIGHT, however, he was suddenly dragged out of his aloofness by a girl. At the first glance he saw that she was exquisite; her colouring was as warm and delicate as a pastel, her eyes were blue and thoughtful, and her mouth and chin were at one instant adorable for their childlike appeal, and, at the next, adorable for their striking firmness. Incidentally she had a beautiful figure, and she was wearing a gown of sapphire-blue velvet which snatched at Iglesia's imagination.

Their hands had met and their eyes had met; and Iglesia was hoping, against experience, that she would not shatter the effect of all her loveliness by some gross banality.

"It was the very nicest thing I have ever heard," she said.

Iglesia caught his breath. He looked at his hostess, and perceived that she was deep in conversation with an Ambassador.

"Then to reward me," he said, with his faint Castilian accent, "won't you let me take you to supper?"

Her sudden accession of colour told him that she was both astonished and pleased. He offered his arm.

"But it wouldn't be fair of me to monopolize you, would it?" she protested.

"Fair to whom?" Already, he was guiding her towards a convenient corner.

"Why, to Mrs. Appleby."

"Mrs. Appleby," he said, delaying his smile, "has paid me two hundred guineas to play here. If she had insisted in advance that I should take supper with any one particular individual—even herself—I should have told my manager to decline the engagement for me. I make my own selection—when I am so fortunate."

She looked at him, and looked away. "I am the one who is fortunate."

"Permit me to disagree with you." He raised his hand in the direction of a footman. "Are you one of these *spirituelles* who call for nothing but a little ice-bird in a nest of spun-sugar, or are you as hungry as I am? Shall we say jellied turkey?"

She laughed unaffectedly. "Apparently I'm even hungrier than you are. To tell the truth, I was hoping for some bouillon, first."

"Cream of mushrooms," said a resplendent servitor, haughtily.

"Sometimes I think I'm rather afraid of people like that," she said, when the man had gone. "Aren't you?"

"Afraid? Well, hardly afraid."

In spite of her outward poise, she was embarrassed to have won the notice of the young celebrity; and she did not dare to loiter the fraction of a second between speeches.

"Wha—what *are* you afraid of, then?"

Iglesia blinked, caught the spirit of the moment, and gave her his irresistible smile. "That is a hard question to answer. It would be hard for anyone to answer—honestly. But, if you like, I will tell you—honestly. First, I am afraid of the cold. That is because of my hands. Second——" He hesitated.

"Well? Second?"

"I was thinking whether I could afford to be honest. Second—and last—I am afraid of girls."

Once more she was hurried on by embarrassment.

"You must carry tremendous insurance on your hands, don't you?"

Iglesia nodded. "Yes; yes." Gradually, he himself was growing disconcerted. "But none on my heart," he added, reflectively.

"You mustn't say things like that, though."

"Then you should not ask questions," said Iglesia. "And besides, your enemy is coming with the cream of mushrooms."

It was fully half an hour before they were interrupted, and during that interval Iglesia had fallen irrevocably in love. Nor was it an aimless passion of his foster-race which overcame him; it was a normal and profound emotion caused by a girl he had admired on sight, and found absorbing on acquaintance. He was possessed by her appearance, her voice, her manner, her opinions. Accidentally he had touched her hand, and the contact had given him a fierce and recessive delight which had strong elements of novelty in it. He had been physically weary when he had risen from the piano; now he was alert, and tingling with electric energy. Not even his sharpest critic could have detected any apathy in him.

"And shall I see you again—ever?" he asked, anxiously.

"Of course, you will," she said.

"Might I——"

Her quickness of perception charmed him. "There is always tea. You have met my mother. We shall both be glad to see you, any afternoon."

"There will be a fight," said Iglesia, "between convention and impatience. I have to thank you for——"

He broke off abruptly, and made his familiar, infinitesimal bow.

"You were going to say?" she suggested.

"I forgot myself. You had not asked any question. I almost earned another reproof." He bowed again, and gave her his best smile, which was matchless. "Oh, never mind," said Iglesia. "I shall hope to have the honour of earning it later."

He went home almost on tiptoe, inhaling from the bottom of his lungs, in accordance with all the best theories of good health. Before his largest mirror he stood for several minutes, deprecating his features, and wishing that he were better-looking. Finally, he shrugged shoulders at himself, thanked his stars that at least he wore his hair short, like a gentleman, and whispered an excellent Spanish proverb which has to do with the inherent conceit of mules. Then he took himself off to bed, and slept badly, and was glad of it.

WHEN impatience had mastered him, he went to tea, and became so thoroughly demoralized that he broke, of his own accord, one of his most stringent rules, and consented to play informally. More than that, he trotted out his new tone-poem in B-flat minor, *Opus* 8, which he had never intended to play at all except as a final encore on State occasions.

Later, when he had won a brief *tête-à-tête* with his divinity, he explained to her just why he had played the tone-poem.

"But you mustn't say those things," she persisted.

"And why not?"

"Because I don't want you to."

In spite of her intonation, Iglesia looked hurt.

"You women—all of you—you puzzle me. If I say a silly, gorgeous compliment I do not mean, you are pleased, while you know very well I do not mean it. But if I say the thing that comes truly to me, then you pretend not to like it. Why?"

She looked at him from under her heavy lashes.

"It isn't that. But I want us to be friends. You do, too, don't you? Well ——"

"Friends!" said Iglesia, with his palms outward. "How can a man and a woman be friends? Two men—yes, certainly. Two women—I am not sure. You will know that better than I do. But for a man and a woman, there are no fine distinctions of friendship. They are thrilled to be together —which is love; or they are not thrilled to be together—which is indifference. There is nothing between. They may have for each other affection, sympathy, understanding, pity, hatred—but not friendship, unless they are of different generations, or else they are icebergs. I speak, that is, out of my own observation. I have known many women; some of them for years; they are not my friends. They are perhaps my mother's, and my sisters' and my aunts', and my cousins', but not my friends. It is impossible. And you, who have come so without warning into my life——"

"But you have only met me twice!"

Iglesia waved his hands. "But Dante had met Beatrice only once."

She gave him a smile so elusive, and yet so comprehending, that his heart's action increased by a dozen beats a minute.

"I don't agree with your philosophy, so let us *try* to be friends, anyway. Oh! There's one thing I meant to ask you. Did you ever write any waltzes?"

"Yes," said Iglesia, reluctantly accepting the change of subject. "My first composition was a concert waltz in E minor. It has brought my most distinguished honour. It has been performed in recital by Serge Rachmaninoff, Rudolph Ganz, Vladimir de Pachmann, Josef Hofmann——"

She shook her head. "No, I don't mean a concert waltz; I mean a *real* waltz."

"And what," he inquired, politely, "is a *real* waltz, then?"

"Why, it's one you could dance to. Real music all the same, but—well, human."

Iglesia sat up straighter. "*I*? *I* write waltzes for people to dance to? For crazy orchestras to play in restaurants; and hand-organs—hand-organs with the little monkeys attached—to murder at the street corners? My dear young lady! You do not realize what you are saying!"

"Oh, yes, I do," she assured him. "You see, the other night you were kind enough to ask me what I really thought about your playing. And I said almost what I thought."

"Almost?"

"There was something I—I didn't dare to put in. I didn't think I knew you well enough. But my idea about friendship—it is so different from yours—is that friends are simply people who want to help each other. You play beautifully, of course, but —may I talk to you just the way I want to? Everything you do seems so cold, and polished, and brilliant. And a good deal of it I can't quite understand. It is so—academic. You are living up above us. And the one thing that would bring you and your

"I write waltzes for people to dance to! My dear young lady! You do not realize what you are saying!"

audiences ever so much closer together, is—well, suppose I say melody. Melody instead of mathematics."

"H'm!" said Iglesia. "You would have me support the hand-organs? Is that it?"

"No. I'm terribly afraid I'm not making it clear to you——"

"I share your terror," he said, humbly.

The motion of her hands was very pretty, and very expressive.

"I was just thinking that if you once let yourself go and put all the—the interest into it that you put into the things you say to me, you could write the most wonderful waltz in the world. And it would be good for you, too. You have everything but feeling. You aren't *common* enough yet. And music is the commonest thing there is. It ought to be so that everybody could understand it. And I was wondering what you could do to make the very best out of yourself, and I thought——"

"You love to dance," said Iglesia.

"I beg your pardon?"

"I said, you love to dance. It was not an inquiry; it was a statement."

"Yes, I do."

"As the saying goes, you would rather die than eat—I mean, you would rather dance than eat, and die dancing. Is that it?"

"Pretty nearly."

"I will write you a waltz," said Iglesia.

Her eyes widened and the colour flamed in her cheeks. "Not really!"

Iglesia's eyes were burning.

"Not for the hand-organs, but for you. If you doubt, you shall see, you shall hear. It will still be Iglesia, still be music, but you shall dance to it, if you like, and when you hear it, you will know that Iglesia is whispering to you, between the notes: 'I love you.'"

She shrank away from his vehemence.

"B—but I told you, you mustn't *say* those things!"

Unseen, he pressed her hand, and rose. "In that case, I shall have to go home and write them. I shall ask your mother to bring you to my studio on Wednesday. I shall play for you anything you say. You will tell me what you like best, and I shall play it. Then I shall know better how to write for you. And in the meantime——"

She looked down. "In the meantime——"

"In the meantime," said Iglesia, subdued, "you have the opportunity to learn for yourself how it feels to be a lode-star."

ON Tuesday afternoon he gave a recital, and on Wednesday morning the critics were still searching for fresh adjectives. At the last moment he had changed his programme; and instead of interpreting the ultra-modern composers, including himself, he had unexpectedly chosen to linger over the harmonies which may be called chestnuts, and are still classics, and still beautiful.

It had taken the house exactly ten seconds to realize that a new Iglesia had come before them; and, after that, he got a reception which had no parallel in his career. Never before had women cried among the audience. *Ingénues* had sometimes crowded to the platform, bearing flowers; and matrons had sacrificed their gloves in applause; but nobody had cried. Nor had ever a sweeping wave of emotion rippled over the people, so that one could feel it in the air, and sense the personality which caused it. Nor yet, in all his days, had Iglesia taken his calls as he did this afternoon—taken them with tears in his eyes, and his arms outstretched, as though at last he had found communion with his people.

By Wednesday morning the force of the reaction had not left him, and he was very tired and depressed. The newspapers came, and he read them, one by one, and put them down quietly, and sat with his head in his hands, thinking.

"I must be worthy of her," said Iglesia to himself. "I must deserve her. I must write her a waltz."

His manager telephoned to ask whether he might come at three, to discuss a series of performances for which they could now demand the highest prices, with the absolute certainty that——

"I have a previous engagement," said Iglesia, curtly, and hung up the receiver.

She came, with her mother, at the appointed time, and both of them were radiant. They had also read the newspapers.

"Tell me your favourites," he said. "Tell me the music you love best in all the world. Make me a little list." And in accordance with the little list he played, in order, the Chopin Nocturne in E-flat, the Military Polonaise, the Paderewski Minuet, the threadbare Prelude of Rachmaninoff, Mendelssohn's Spring Song, Traumersi, Liebestraum, and the "Beautiful Ohio" Waltz.

Before he could complete the list, however, he was compelled to admit his ignorance in one respect. "I am sorry," he said. "I am very sorry indeed, but I have never in my life heard of the 'Beautiful Ohio' Waltz."

Here she had struggled with her muff. "That's what I thought, so I brought you the music."

Iglesia took it, examined it carefully, and placed it before him on the rack. "It would seem to be very pretty," he said, with an effort.

Another genius, or a less purposeful lover, might have trifled with the situation; but

Iglesia was to far gone even too feel contempt for the popular tune. He played it with every regard for its character, and his own; and he made of it, in consequence, a gracious reverie. He had no means of knowing that he aroused, by his attitude towards it, an answering throb of devotion in the girl he adored. He had no means of knowing that from this instant she forgot to look upon him as the property of the world, and saw in him only a lovable, talented boy whose sincerity was not to be discounted, and whose vast ability was incidental to his affections.

Certain it is that the weakening of her resistance dated from this afternoon. In another week he had called her "Doris," unrebuked. There were swift-flying seconds during which he was permitted to rest his hand upon hers. Paradise was in the foreground; and yet, with all his new-found motives, and all his resolution, he was still fumbling for the theme of his masterpiece.

It was not through lack of diligence that he had missed a theme; and it was not through any inhibition. He never said to himself, or thought, that the project was beneath his intelligence. On the contrary, he accused himself of gross stupidity.

As he sat at his piano, seeing visions of her, he was twice smitten with vigorous conceptions. He converted them, on paper, to *Opus* 9 and *Opus* 10. One of them was rather like Debussy, and the other was slightly less intelligible. Both of them, judged by the measure of modernity, were works of art: but Iglesia knew, in his despair, that Doris would call them coldly brilliant, and he did not venture to confess them to her. With dogged calmness, he placed them with his publishers at an increased royalty.

The question of her taste was immaterial to him. She liked colour, melody, rhythm, movement. Unless his ears and his heart and his fingers joined in a conspiracy to betray him, she should have what she wanted.

There came an evening when he danced with her, for the first time. She danced superbly; she was herself the incarnation of the music which swayed her. And presently she said to Iglesia, looking up into his eyes (which is a dangerous thing for any woman to do to her dancing partner): "This is the 'Beautiful Ohio'—don't you see what a difference it makes?"

"I have been conscious of it," he said, gravely.

"Well, can you imagine your getting any closer to people's lives? Look round. And I can tell by the way you are dancing, too. Don't you wish you had written it yourself?"

Iglesia did not cringe. Let her taste be what it might, here was a definite thing which she appreciated.

"I only hope that mine will please you half as well."

"When will it be done, Arturo?"

"I cannot say. As soon as possible."

DURING subsequent weeks she made the same inquiry, and got very much the same response. Iglesia was growing nervous about it. In sheer desperation he manufactured a bright little impromptu for her, and she was grateful, but not remotely satisfied. Perhaps her satisfaction was lessened because of what the critics were saying about Iglesia—about his extraordinary display of fire and passion, and his unaccountable zeal for chestnuts. She told him once, point-blank, that unless he kept his promise to her, she might easily doubt his ingenuousness. She implied that there was something very mysterious about this professed love of his—love which could obtain for him an increase in his income, but could not stir him to the creation of so small a token of esteem as a simple waltz.

Iglesia boiled over. He had fidgeted at the keyboard until he yawned at his own incompetence; he had seized upon, and discarded, half a hundred various ideas. The trouble was that Doris had demanded a task so infinitely far below his comprehension that he could not get his mind down to it. He was literally unable to think in musical terms at all, without thinking on a higher level than she demanded. The task was too simple; too elementary.

He tried to explain to her, and she grew dignified, and said that she refused to believe him. He expostulated, pleaded, lost his head, and swore by all the saints that she was more to him than any of them.

Perhaps unintentionally, she looked at him from under her lashes.

Iglesia said something under his breath, and the next instant she was in his arms.

She struggled, and Iglesia, frightened by his own courage, merely held her. She relaxed, and fright departed from him. He bent to her, and she averted her head. There was a tremendous silence; at length he bent lower, and put his heart on his lips, and kissed her. And then a longer and more pulsing silence.

"You will have to go now, Arturo."

Iglesia was aghast. "Why, dearest? Why?"

"I—you will have to go."

"After—*that?*"

"Yes."

"But it is impossible."

"No—you must."

"Say first that you love me."

"I can't."

"And yet you *do?*"

" I—I don't know."

" You will marry me, dearest. You know *that.*"

" No—please, Arturo."

" I shall see your father, and——"

" *No!* You mustn't! Not yet!"

" And why not? Why not? All these terrible ' mustn'ts ' of yours——"

" Not until I'm sure—you *really* love me."

" Sure? Have I not said I——"

" And still you won't do the least little thing for me, Arturo. Oh, you may want to kiss me, and all that, but——"

Iglesia leaped to his feet. " Mincemeat!" he thundered. " Is it the infernal waltz again? I say I love you, and you demand a *waltz?* Doris——"

" Arturo!"

" I ask your pardon, dearest! But I say I love you, and then you——"

" But you make me wonder, Arturo. And it was such a little thing I asked."

He thought wildly of *Opus* 9 and *Opus* 10, the impromptu, and what the critics had written of him recently. " Without it, am I so hateful to you?"

" No, dear, no—but it's all I have ever asked. You promised it yourself. And if you can't keep such a little promise to me as that, don't you see how I have to wonder—about bigger promises?"

Iglesia mopped his forehead. " And when I bring the waltz to you, then you are convinced?"

" You must keep your word, dear. For your own sake, too."

" Then I may see your father?"

" Y—yes, Arturo. But you mustn't kiss me again! No! You mustn't! Not until—until then!—Arturo! That is rude of you! Where are you going?"

Iglesia, who had turned away, turned back to gaze down at her.

" Where would you suppose? To the studio."

" But you are tired, dear! Don't be silly. It's past eleven o'clock. I only meant——"

" The piano," said Iglesia, stolidly, " never sleeps. Until I have won your confidence, dearest, I think I am to follow its excellent example. You have challenged me. Very well. I accept. I shall come to you only when I bring you your music."

She stood by him, with her hand on his sleeve. ' I don't want you to kill yourself, Arturo, but—won't you come soon?"

Iglesia trembled. " Soon—or never," he said.

HE immured himself in his studio, and his temper rose by degrees until he had almost reached the point of hysteria. He sent out frenziedly for an armful of the latest popular waltzes, and after he had dashed through them, he deliberately selected the least expensive vase from his mantel, and soothed his soul by smashing it against the bricks of his fireplace. " I—will—be—go to blazes!" he roared. Then, miraculously, at this precise juncture, he caught a *motif* out of thin air, and rushed to the piano, and played it over and over. With descending enthusiasm, he cocked his ear to it, and finally, with a loud thump in the bass, consigned it to oblivion. It would do very well for a concert waltz, but not for Doris.

He telephoned to her, and the sound of her voice inflamed him. He was almost persuaded that she loved him. Then he went back to the piano, and battled with it for half a day, and broke down and cried, out of utter helplessness, on the keys.

Fortunately, he was ashamed of himself. That alone might not have saved him from wrecking his disposition; he was assisted by an engagement in Birmingham, and the journey came as a timely respite. He achieved another triumph, and returned home. To Doris, over the telephone, he said: " You have not forgotten?" And she replied: " Not yet, dear. Have you?"

" I am working," he said. " And you?"

" I—I'm waiting, Arturo."

Once more he took to the piano, and the *motif* he had caught out of thin air was recurrent. He played it, and frowned. He shook his head. With a sickening consciousness of failure, he hunted up one of the popular waltzes, and stared at it with loathing. Then grimly. Then enviously. Even the lithographed cover grated on his sensibilities. And of a sudden, the *motif* ran in his brain again, and inspiration came to him.

HE took the manuscript to Doris, and she sat by him as he played from it. When he had ended, he did not dare to look at her, so that he remained motionless until he heard her speak.

" It is beautiful, Arturo—it is beautiful," she said, hushed.

Iglesia could hardly breathe. " Does it—convince? I know it is good music—but does it convince?"

" It is the loveliest thing I have ever heard. And it is mine?"

" Yours, and mine." He dared to look now.

" What did you call it, Arturo?"

" ' The Bride's Waltz.'"

" Oh!"

Iglesia's hand, as it touched hers, was icy. " I understand that your father has been reading in the library. May I kiss you—once—before I go to him?"

" Y—yes, Arturo. Because I'm afraid."

"'It is the loveliest thing I have ever heard. What did you call it, Arturo?'
'The Bride's Waltz.'"

TO Doris's father the interview was distinctly embarrassing. He was a cosmopolitan, and he was proud to have his house frequented by greatness; but Iglesia as an acquaintance, or as a friend, and Iglesia as a son-in-law were two separate matters. And in his best diplomacy he tried to make Iglesia see that Doris's mother must also be consulted. Without prejudice to Iglesia, his character or his devotion, it was certain that the subject required a domestic congress. They all liked him, they all admired him, they all approved of him, but——

"I am calm enough—and I am man enough," said Iglesia, "to listen respectfully to the exception."

Doris's father, who pursued a policy of absolute frankness, looked Iglesia straight in the eye. "It is the—er—the international feature, my dear sir."

"International?" Iglesia threw back his head. "And what do you mean—international?"

"Isn't it quite evident?"

Iglesia stared at him, reddened, and stood up. "Evident? Oh, yes, quite evident. That is the sole objection?"

"From my point of view, yes."

Iglesia went pale, and sat down again. "Then I shall have to tell you what fills me with shame. It is a secret. It is not my fault. You are not sure of me, because of my name, my nationality. Your daughter was afraid of that; she told me she was afraid of something; I did not guess. She was afraid of *this*. Listen: because of your daughter, I have risked my reputation as an artist with my public. I have done it gladly. There is no need to be alarmed—it was music I wrote to please her. Now, because of her, I gladly risk the reputation of my parents, as people of discrimination and tact, with you. My name was Arthur Church, and before it was changed we were living in Kingsheath, Oxfordshire, where I was born. If I look like a Spaniard, it is because I was born so; if I have the name of a Spaniard, that is because it was done by law when I was young, to make capital of it; if I speak like a Spaniard, it is because I was trained in Spain, for this music business. But I say again, it is not my fault. I refer you to the legal records. Iglesia! Arturo Iglesia!" He laughed oddly. "And my father was John Church, and my mother was Mary Elizabeth McGraw. International?" He laughed again.

A DAY or two after the engagement was announced, Señor Arturo Iglesia, the famous concert pianist, drove some little distance from home and presently intruded upon the privacy of a young man who wore a wrinkled green suit and a checked waistcoat, and had pushed his hat far back on his head. He was seated at a piano, and as he played he smoked a thin, dyspeptic cigar which slanted upwards at an angle of sixty degrees.

"Good morning, Mr. Milliken," said the genius, bowing.

The young man stopped playing and greeted him effusively.

"Oh—hallo, Iglesia. How are you?"

"Most excellent, thank you. I have made the contract. The advance payment is two thousand pounds. There is also a thousand for exclusive privileges for a little while for some idiotic musical comedy. They are mad over it. They say it will sweep the country. They say it is the waltz of the century—and other rot. I have here your cheque for one half the amount."

The young man at the piano crossed his legs and hugged them. "That's fine. Much obliged. Almost wish I hadn't agreed to keep my name off it. Oh, it was generous of you to go halves. I don't dispute *that*. But if you'd used my name on it, I wouldn't have asked for a penny. I have a reputation, too, you know. I say, tell you what we'll do: you put my name on the waltz and take back your cheque."

"Too late," said Iglesia. "Besides, it was our agreement."

The young man sighed heavily.

"All right. I know it was. Only—Oh, well—*I'll* never let the secret out. Don't worry. Only that's a peach of a waltz—a peach. Best I ever wrote."

"You forget," said Iglesia, coldly, "that I provided the *motif*."

"I don't forget anything. Then I wrote her; didn't I?"

"Then I," said Iglesia, "I *re*wrote her. And made it what it is now. I could not have done your part; you could not have done mine."

"Oh, well, we won't quarrel. But it certainly is a peach of a waltz. Well, does the lady like it?"

"Very much," said Iglesia.

"Funny thing," said the young man, absently striking discords. "You're Iglesia, and the lady doesn't like your stuff. She likes mine; she doesn't know it, but she likes mine better. I'm married, myself. I make a living out of this business, and the old woman, she hates music like poison. Funny thing about women, isn't it? I say, I'm doing part of the music for a new revue. If you should happen to want to dig up some new tune or other, and collaborate again, why, I——"

"The Saints in Heaven!" said Iglesia, insulted on the threshold. "Because I am an artist, do you think I am a bigamist also? And besides, I am composing a sonata."

ANOTHER "ARCHIE" STORY.

FIRST AID for LOONEY BIDDLE

by

P. G. Wodehouse

ILLUSTRATED BY A. WALLIS MILLS

THE jeweller, a stout, comfortable man, leaned on the counter and fingered the bracelet lovingly. Archie Moffam, leaning on the other side of the counter, inspected it searchingly, and wished that he knew more about these rummy little objects; for he had rather a sort of idea that the merchant was scheming to do him in the eyeball. In a chair by his side, Reggie van Tuyl, half asleep as usual, yawned despondently. He had permitted Archie to lug him into this shop in order to help him select a birthday present for Lucille; and he wanted to buy it and go. Any form of sustained concentration fatigued Reggie.

"Now, this," said the jeweller, "I could do at eight hundred and fifty dollars."

"Grab it!" murmured Mr. van Tuyl.

The jeweller eyed him approvingly, a man after his own heart; but Archie looked doubtful. It was all very well for Reggie to tell him to grab it in that careless way. Reggie was a dashed millionaire, and no doubt bought bracelets by the pound or the gross or what not; but he himself was in an entirely different position. It was only by what amounted to a jolly old miracle that he was in a position to purchase jewellery at all. Out of an absolutely blue sky he had received two or three days ago a present of five hundred dollars from an aunt in England. This by thrift and enterprise—that is to say, by betting Reggie that the New York Giants would win the opening game of the series against the Pittsburg baseball team—he had contrived on the previous day to double. He was thus able to go to a thousand dollars for Lucille's birthday present, and it behoved him to see that he got his money's worth.

"Eight hundred and fifty!" he said, hesitating.

"Worth it!" mumbled Reggie van Tuyl.

"More than worth it," amended the jeweller. "I can assure you that it is better value than you could get anywhere on Fifth Avenue."

"Yes?" said Archie. He took the bracelet and twiddled it thoughtfully. "Well, my dear old jeweller, one can't say fairer than that, can one—or two, as the case may be!" He frowned. "Oh, well, all right! But it's rummy that women are so fearfully keen on these little thingummies, isn't it? I mean to say, can't see what they see in them. Stones, and all that. Still, there it is, of course!"

"There," said the jeweller, "as you say, it is, sir."

"Yes, there it is!"

"Yes, there it is," said the jeweller, "fortunately for people in my line of business. Will you take it with you, sir?"

Archie reflected.

"No. No, not take it with me. The fact is, you know, my wife's coming back from the country to-night, and it's her birthday to-morrow, and the thing's for her, and, if it was popping about the place to-night, she might see it, and it would sort of spoil the surprise. I mean to say, she doesn't know I'm giving it her, and all that!"

"Besides," said Reggie, achieving a certain animation now that the tedious business interview was concluded, "going to the ball-game this afternoon—might get pocket picked—yes, better have it sent."

"Where shall I send it, sir?"

"Eh? Oh, shoot it along to Mrs. Archibald Moffam, at the Cosmopolis. Not to-day, you know. Buzz it in first thing to-morrow."

Having completed the satisfactory deal, the jeweller threw off the business manner and became chatty.

"So you are going to the ball-game? It should be an interesting contest."

Reggie van Tuyl, now—by his own standards—completely awake, took exception to this remark.

"Not a bit of it!" he said, decidedly.

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"No contest! Can't call it a contest. Walk-over for the Pirates!"

Archie was stung to the quick. There is that about baseball which arouses enthusiasm and the partisan spirit in the unlikeliest bosoms. It is almost impossible for a man to live in America and not become gripped by the game; and Archie had long been one of its warmest adherents. He was a whole-hearted supporter of the Giants, and his only grievance against Reggie, in other respects an estimable young man, was that the latter, whose money had been inherited from steel-mills in that city, had an absurd regard for the Pirates of Pittsburg.

"What absolute bally rot!" he exclaimed. "Look what the Giants did to them yesterday!"

"Yesterday isn't to-day," said Reggie.

"No, it'll be a jolly sight worse," said Archie. "Looney Biddle 'll be pitching for the Giants to-day."

"That's just what I mean. The Pirates have got him rattled. Look what happened last time."

Archie understood, and his generous nature chafed at the innuendo. Looney Biddle—so-called by an affectionately admiring public as the result of certain marked eccentricities—was beyond dispute the greatest left-handed pitcher New York had possessed in the last decade. But there was one blot on Mr. Biddle's otherwise stainless scutcheon. Five weeks before, on the occasion of the Giants' invasion of Pittsburg, he had gone mysteriously to pieces. Few native-born partisans, brought up to baseball from the cradle, had been plunged into a profounder gloom on that occasion than Archie; but his soul revolted at the thought that that sort of thing could ever happen again.

"I'm not saying," continued Reggie, "that Biddle isn't a very fair pitcher, but it's cruel to send him against the Pirates, and somebody ought to stop it. His best friends should interfere. Once a team gets a pitcher rattled, he's never any good against them again. He loses his nerve."

The jeweller nodded approval of this sentiment.

"They never come back," he said, sententiously.

The fighting blood of the Moffams was now thoroughly stirred. Archie eyed his friend sternly. Reggie was a good chap—in many respects an extremely sound egg—but he must not be allowed to talk rot of this description about the greatest left-handed pitcher of the age.

"It seems to me, old companion," he said, "that a small bet is indicated at this juncture. How about it?"

"Don't want to take your money."

"You won't have to! In the cool twilight of the merry old summer evening I, friend of my youth and companion of my riper years, shall be trousering yours."

Reggie yawned. The day was very hot, and this argument was making him feel sleepy again.

"Well, just as you like, of course. Double or quits on yesterday's bet, if that suits you."

For a moment Archie hesitated. Firm as his faith was in Mr. Biddle's stout left arm, he had not intended to do the thing on quite this scale. That thousand dollars of his was earmarked for Lucille's birthday present, and he doubted whether he ought to risk it. Then the thought that the honour of New York was in his hands decided him. Besides, the risk was negligible. Betting on Looney Biddle was like betting on the probable rise of the sun in the east. The thing began to seem to Archie a rather unusually sound and conservative investment. He remembered that the jeweller, until he drew him firmly but kindly to earth and urged him to curb his exuberance and talk business on a reasonable plane, had started brandishing bracelets that cost about two thousand. There would be time to pop in at the shop this evening after the game and change the one he had selected for one of those. Nothing was too good for Lucille on her birthday.

"Right-ho!" he said. "Make it so, old friend!"

ARCHIE walked back to the Cosmopolis. No misgivings came to mar his perfect contentment. He felt no qualms about separating Reggie from another thousand dollars. Except for a little small change in the possession of the Messrs. Rockefeller and Vincent Astor, Reggie had all the money in the world and could afford to lose. He hummed a gay air as he entered the lobby and crossed to the cigar-stand to buy a few cigarettes to see him through the afternoon.

The girl behind the cigar counter welcomed him with a bright smile. Archie was popular with all the *employés* of the Cosmopolis.

"'S a great day, Mr. Moffam!"

"One of the brightest and best," agreed Archie. "Could you dig me out two or possibly three cigarettes of the usual description? I shall want something to smoke at the ball-game."

"You going to the ball-game?"

"Rather! Wouldn't miss it for a fortune."

"No?"

"Absolutely no! Not with jolly old Biddle pitching."

The cigar-stand girl laughed amusedly.

"Is he pitching this afternoon? Say, that feller's a nut! D'you know him?"

"Know him? Well, I've seen him pitch and so forth."

" I've got a girl friend who's engaged to him ! "

Archie looked at her with positive respect. It would have been more dramatic, of course, if she had been engaged to the great man herself, but still the mere fact that she had a girl friend in that astounding position gave her a sort of halo.

" No, really ! " he said. ' I say, by Jove, really ! Fancy that ! "

" Yes, she's engaged to him all right. Been engaged close on a coupla months now."

" I say ! That's frightfully interesting ! Fearfully interesting, really ! "

" It's funny about that guy," said fhe cigar-stand girl. ' He's a nut ! The fellow who said there's plenty of room at the top must have been thinking of Gus Biddle's head ! He's crazy about m' girl friend, y' know, and, whenever they have a fuss, it seems like he sort of flies right off the handle."

" Goes in off the deep end, eh ? "

" Yes, *sir !* Loses what little sense he's got. Why, the last time him and m' girl friend got to scrapping was when he was going off to Pittsburg to play, about a month ago. He'd been out with her the day he left for there, and he had a grouch or something, and he started making low, sneaky cracks about her Uncle Sigsbee. Well, m' girl friend's got a nice disposition, but she c'n get mad, and she just left him flat and told him all was over. And he went off to Pittsburg, and, when he started in to pitch the opening game, he just couldn't keep his mind on his job, and look what them assassins done to him ! Five runs in the first innings ! Yessir, he's a nut all right ! "

'Archie looked at her with positive respect. 'I say ! That's frightfully interesting.' "

Archie was deeply concerned. So this was the explanation of that mysterious disaster, that weird tragedy which had puzzled the sporting press from coast to coast.

" Good God ! Is he often taken like that ? "

" Oh, he's all right when he hasn't had a fuss with m' girl friend," said the cigar-stand girl, indifferently. Her interest in baseball was tepid. Women are too often like this—mere butterflies, with no concern for the deeper side of life.

" Yes, but I say ! What I mean to say, you know ! Are they pretty pally now ? The good old Dove of Peace flapping its little wings fairly briskly and all that ? "

" Oh, I guess everything's nice and smooth just now. I seen m' girl friend yesterday, and Gus was taking her to the movies last night, so I guess everything's nice and smooth."

Archie breathed a sigh of relief.

" Took her to the movies, did he ? Stout fellow ? "

" I was at the funniest picture last week," said the cigar-stand girl. " Honest, it was a scream ! It was like this—— "

Archie listened politely ; then went in to get a bite of lunch. His equanimity, shaken by the discovery of the rift in the peerless one's armour, was restored. Good old Biddle had taken the girl to the movies last night. Probably he had squeezed her hand a goodish bit in the dark. With what result ? Why, the fellow would be feeling like one of those chappies who used to joust for the smiles of females in the Middle Ages. What he meant to say, presumably the girl would be at the game this afternoon, whooping him on, and good old Biddle would give of his very best

and juiciest. He would be so full of beans and buck that there would be no holding him.

Encouraged by these thoughts, Archie lunched with an untroubled mind. Luncheon concluded, he proceeded to the lobby to buy back his hat and stick from the boy brigand with whom he had left them. It was while he was conducting this financial operation that he observed that at the cigar-stand, which adjoined the coat-and-hat alcove, his friend behind the counter had become engaged in conversation with another girl.

This was a determined-looking young woman in a blue dress and a large hat of a bold and flowery species. Archie happening to attract her attention, she gave him a glance out of a pair of fine brown eyes, then, as if she did not think much of him, turned to her companion and resumed their conversation—which, being of an essentially private and intimate nature, she conducted, after the manner of her kind, in a ringing soprano which penetrated into every corner of the lobby. Archie, waiting while the brigand reluctantly made change for a dollar bill, was privileged to hear every word.

" Right from the start I seen he was in a ugly mood. *You* know how he gets, dearie! Chewing his upper lip and looking at you as if you were so much dirt beneath his feet! How was *I* to know he'd lost fifteen dollars fifty-five playing poker, and, anyway, I don't see where he gets a licence to work off his grouches on me. And I told him so. I said to him, ' Gus,' I said, ' if you can't be bright and smiling and cheerful when you take me out, why do you come round at all ? ' Was I wrong or right, dearie ? "

The girl behind the counter heartily endorsed her conduct. Once you let a man think he could use you as a door-mat, where were you ?

" What happened then, honey ? "

" Well, after that we went to the movies."

Archie started convulsively. The change from his dollar-bill leaped in his hand. Some of it sprang overboard and tinkled across the floor, with the brigand in pursuit. A monstrous suspicion had begun to take root in his mind.

" Well, we got good seats, but—well, you know how it is, once things start going wrong. You know that hat of mine, the one with the daisies and cherries and the feather—I'd taken it off and given it him to hold when we went in, and what do you think that fell'r'd done ? Put it on the floor and crammed it under the seat, just to save himself the trouble of holding it on his lap! And, when I showed him I was upset, all he said was that he was a pitcher and not a hatstand ! "

ARCHIE was paralyzed. He paid no attention to the hat-check boy, who was trying to induce him to accept treasure-trove to the amount of forty-five cents. His whole being was concentrated on this frightful tragedy which had burst upon him like a tidal wave. No possible room for doubt remained. " Gus " was the only Gus in New York that mattered, and this resolute and injured female before him was the Girl Friend, in whose slim hands rested the happiness of New York's baseball followers, the destiny of the unconscious Giants, and the fate of his thousand dollars. A strangled croak proceeded from his parched lips.

" Well, I didn't say anything at the moment. It just shows how them movies can work on a girl's feelings. It was a Bryant Washburn film, and somehow, whenever I see him on the screen, nothing else seems to matter. I just get that goo-ey feeling, and couldn't start a fight if you asked me to. So we go off to have a soda, and I said to him, ' That sure was a lovely film, Gus ! ' and would you believe me, he says straight out that he didn't think it was such a much, and he thought Bryant Washburn was a pill ! A pill ! " The Girl Friend's penetrating voice shook with emotion.

" He never ! " exclaimed the shocked cigar-store girl.

" He did, if I die the next moment ! I wasn't more than half-way through my vanilla and maple, but I got up without a word and left him. And I ain't seen a sight of him since. So there you are, dearie! Was I right or wrong ? "

The cigar-store girl gave unqualified approval. What men like Gus Biddle needed for the salvation of their souls was an occasional good jolt right where it would do most good.

" I'm glad you think I acted right, dearie," said the Girl Friend. " I guess I've been too weak with Gus, and he's took advantage of it. I s'pose I'll have to forgive him one of these old days, but, believe me, it won't be for a week."

The cigar-store girl was in favour of a fortnight.

" No," said the Girl Friend, regretfully. " I don't believe I could hold out that long. But, if I speak to him inside a week, well——! Well, I gotta be going. Good-bye, honey."

The cigar-store girl turned to attend to an impatient customer, and the Girl Friend, walking with the firm and decisive steps which indicate character, made for the swing-door leading to the street. And as she went, the paralysis which had gripped Archie relaxed its hold. Still ignoring the forty-five cents which the hat-check boy continued to proffer, he leaped in her wake like a panther and came upon her just as she

was stepping into a car. The car was full, but not too full for Archie. He dropped his five cents into the box and reached for a vacant strap. He looked down upon the flowered hat. There she was. And there he was. Archie rested his left ear against the forearm of a long, strongly-built young man in a grey suit who had followed him into the car and was sharing his strap, and pondered.

OF course, in a way, the gadget was simple. The wheeze was, in a sense, straightforward and uncomplicated. What he wanted to do was to point out to the injured girl all that hung on her. He wished to touch her heart, to plead with her, to desire her to restate her war-aims, and to persuade her—before three o'clock when that stricken gentleman would be stepping into the pitcher's box to loose off the first ball against the Pittsburg Pirates—to let bygones be bygones and forgive Augustus Biddle. But the blighted problem was, how the deuce to find the opportunity to start. He couldn't yell at the girl in a crowded street-car; and, if he let go of his strap and bent over her, somebody would step on his neck.

The Girl Friend, who for the first five minutes had remained entirely concealed beneath her hat, now sought diversion by looking up and examining the faces of the upper strata of passengers. Her eye caught Archie's in a glance of recognition, and he smiled feebly, endeavouring to register bonhomie and good-will. He was surprised to see a startled expression come into her brown eyes. Her face turned pink. At least, it was pink already, but it turned pinker. The next moment, the car having stopped to pick up more passengers, she jumped off and started to hurry across the street.

Archie was momentarily taken aback. When embarking on this business he had never intended it to become a blend of otter-hunting and a moving-picture chase. He followed her off the car with a sense that his grip on the affair was slipping. Preoccupied with these thoughts, he did not perceive that the long young man who had shared his strap had alighted too. His eyes were fixed on the vanishing figure of the Girl Friend, who, having buzzed at a smart pace into Sixth Avenue, was now legging it in the direction of the staircase leading to one of the stations of the Elevated Railroad. Dashing up the stairs after her, he shortly afterwards found himself suspended as before from a strap, gazing upon the now familiar flowers on top of her hat. From another strap farther down the carriage swayed the long young man in the grey suit.

The train rattled on. Once or twice, when it stopped, the girl seemed undecided whether to leave or remain. She half rose, then sank back again. Finally she walked resolutely out of the car, and Archie, following, found himself in a part of New York strange to him. The inhabitants of this district appeared to eke out a precarious existence, not by taking in one another's washing, but by selling one another second-hand clothes.

Archie glanced at his watch. He had lunched early, but so crowded with emotions had been the period following lunch that he was surprised to find that the hour was only just two. The discovery was a pleasant one. With a full hour before the scheduled start of the game, much might be achieved. He hurried after the girl, and came up with her just as she turned the corner into one of those forlorn New York side-streets which are populated chiefly by children, cats, desultory loafers, and empty meat-tins.

The girl stopped and turned. Archie smiled a winning smile.

"I say, my dear sweet creature!" he said. "I say, my dear old thing, one moment!"

"Is that so?" said the Girl Friend.

"I beg your pardon?"

"Is that *so?*"

Archie began to feel certain tremors. Her eyes were gleaming, and her determined mouth had become a perfectly straight line of scarlet. It was going to be difficult to be chatty to this girl. She was going to be a hard audience. Would mere words be able to touch her heart? The thought suggested itself that, properly speaking, one would need to use a pick-axe.

"If you could spare me a couple of minutes of your valuable time——"

"Say!" The lady drew herself up menacingly. "You tie a can to yourself and disappear! Fade away, or I'll call a cop!"

Archie was horrified at this misinterpretation of his motives. One or two children, playing close at hand, and a loafer who was trying to keep the wall from falling down, seemed pleased. Theirs was a colourless existence, and to the rare purple moments which had enlivened it in the past the calling of a cop had been the unfailing preliminary. The loafer nudged a fellow-loafer, sunning himself against the same wall. The children, abandoning the meat-tin round which their game had centred, drew closer.

"My dear old soul!" said Archie. "You don't understand!"

"Don't I! I know your sort, you trailing arbutus!"

"No, no! My dear old thing, believe me! I wouldn't dream!"

"Are you going or aren't you?"

Eleven more children joined the ring of spectators. The loafers stared silently, like awakened crocodiles.

"But, I say, listen! I only wanted——"
At this point another voice spoke.
"Say!"

THE word "Say!" more almost than any word in the American language, is capable of a variety of shades of expression. It can be genial, it can be jovial, it can be appealing. It can also be truculent. The "Say!" which at this juncture smote upon Archie's ear-drum with a suddenness which made him leap in the air was truculent; and the two loafers and twenty-seven children who now formed the audience were well satisfied with the dramatic development of the performance. To their experienced ears the word had the right ring.

Archie spun round. At his elbow stood a long, strongly-built young man in a grey suit.

"Well!" said the young man, nastily. And he extended a large, freckled face towards Archie's. It seemed to the latter, as he backed against the wall, that the young man's neck must be composed of india-rubber. It appeared to be growing longer every moment. His face, besides being freckled, was a dull brick-red in colour; his lips curled back in an unpleasant snarl, showing a gold tooth; and beside him, swaying in an ominous sort of way, hung two clenched red hands about the size of two young legs of mutton. Archie eyed him with a growing apprehension. There are moments in life when, passing idly on our way, we see a strange face, look into strange eyes, and with a sudden glow of human warmth say to ourselves, "We have found a friend!" This was not one of those moments. The only person Archie had ever seen in his life who looked less friendly was the sergeant-major who had trained him in the early days of the war, before he had got his commission.

"I've had my eye on you!" said the young man.

He still had his eye on him. It was a hot, gimlet-like eye, and it pierced the recesses of Archie's soul. He backed a little farther against the wall.

Archie was frankly disturbed. He was no poltroon, and had proved the fact on many occasions during the days when the entire German army seemed to be picking on him personally, but he hated and shrank from anything in the nature of a bally public scene.

"What," inquired the young man, still bearing the burden of the conversation and shifting his left hand a little farther behind his back, "do you mean by following this young lady?"

Archie was glad he had asked him. This was precisely what he wanted to explain.

"My dear old lad——" he began.

In spite of the fact that he had asked a question and presumably desired a reply, the sound of Archie's voice seemed to be more than the young man could endure. It deprived him of the last vestige of restraint. With a rasping snarl he brought his left fist round in a sweeping semicircle in the direction of Archie's head.

Archie was no novice in the art of self-defence. Since his early days at school he had learned much from leather-faced professors of the science. He had been watching this unpleasant young man's eyes with close attention, and the latter could not have indicated his scheme of action more clearly if he had sent him a formal note. Archie saw the swing all the way. He stepped nimbly aside, and the fist crashed against the wall. The young man fell back with a yelp of anguish.

"Gus!" screamed the Girl Friend, bounding forward.

She flung her arms round the injured man, who was ruefully examining a hand which, always of an out-size, was now swelling to still further dimensions.

"Gus, darling!"

A SUDDEN chill gripped Archie. So engrossed had he been with his mission that it had never occurred to him that the lovelorn pitcher might have taken it into his head to follow the girl as well in the hope of putting in a word for himself. Yet such apparently had been the case. Well, this had definitely torn it. Two loving hearts were united again in complete reconciliation, but a fat lot of good that was. It would be days before the misguided Looney Biddle would be able to pitch with a hand like that. It looked like a ham already, and was still swelling. Probably the wrist was sprained. For at least a week the greatest left-handed pitcher of his time would be about as much use to the Giants in any professional capacity as a cold in the head. And on that crippled hand depended the fate of all the money Archie had in the world. He wished now that he had not thwarted the fellow's simple enthusiasm. To have had his head knocked forcibly through a brick wall would not have been pleasant, but the ultimate outcome would not have been as unpleasant as this. With a heavy heart Archie prepared to withdraw, to be alone with his sorrow.

At this moment, however, the Girl Friend, releasing her wounded lover, made a sudden dash for him, with the plainest intention of blotting him from the earth.

"No, I say! Really!" said Archie, bounding backwards. "I mean to say!"

In a series of events, all of which had been a bit thick, this, in his opinion, achieved the maximum of thickness. It was the extreme,

"There are moments in life when we see a strange face, look into strange eyes, and say to ourselves, 'We have found a friend!' This was not one of those moments."

ragged, outside edge of the limit. To brawl with a fellow-man in a public street had been bad, but to be brawled with by a girl—the shot was not on the board. Absolutely not on the board. There was only one thing to be done. It was dashed undignified, no doubt, for a fellow to pick up the old waukeesis and leg it in the face of the enemy, but there was no other course. Archie started to run; and, as he did so, one of the loafers made the mistake of gripping him by the collar of his coat.

"I got him!" observed the loafer.

THERE is a time for all things. This was essentially not the time for anyone of the male sex to grip the collar of Archie's coat. If a syndicate of Dempsey, Carpentier, and one of the Zoo gorillas had endeavoured to stay his progress at that moment, they would have had reason to consider it a rash move. Archie wanted to be elsewhere, and the blood of generations of Moffams, many of whom had swung a wicked axe in the free-for-all mix-ups of the Middle Ages, boiled within him at any attempt to revise his plans. There was a good deal of the loafer, but it was all soft. Releasing his hold when Archie's heel took him shrewdly on the shin, he received a nasty punch in what would have been the middle of his waistcoat if he had worn one, uttered a gurgling bleat like a wounded sheep, and collapsed against the wall. Archie, with a torn coat, rounded the corner, and sprinted down Ninth Avenue.

The suddenness of the move gave him an initial advantage. He was half-way down the first block before the vanguard of the pursuit poured out of the side street. Continuing to travel well, he skimmed past a large dray which had pulled up across the road, and moved on. The noise of those who pursued was loud and clamorous in the rear, but the dray hid him momentarily from their sight, and it was this fact which led Archie, the old campaigner, to take his next step.

It was perfectly obvious—he was aware of this even in the novel excitement of the chase—that a chappie couldn't hoof it at twenty-five miles an hour indefinitely along a main thoroughfare of a great city without exciting remark. He must take cover. Cover! That was the wheeze. He looked about him for cover.

"You want a nice suit?"

It takes a great deal to startle your commercial New Yorker. The small tailor, standing in his doorway, seemed in no way surprised at the spectacle of Archie, whom he had seen pass at a conventional walk some five minutes before, returning like this at top speed. He assumed that Archie had suddenly remembered that he wanted to buy something.

This was exactly what Archie had done. More than anything else in the world, what he wanted to do now was to get into that shop and have a long talk about gents' clothing. Pulling himself up abruptly, he shot past the small tailor into the dim interior. A confused aroma of cheap clothing greeted him. Except for a small oasis behind a grubby counter, practically all the available space was occupied by suits. Stiff suits, looking like the body when discovered by the police, hung from hooks. Limp suits, with the appearance of having swooned from exhaustion, lay about on chairs and boxes. The place was a cloth morgue, a Sargasso Sea of serge.

Archie would not have had it otherwise. In these quiet groves of clothing a regiment could have lain hid.

"Something nifty in tweeds?" inquired the business-like proprietor of this haven, following him amiably into the shop. "Or, maybe, yes, a nice serge? Say, mister, I got a sweet thing in blue serge that'll fit you like the paper on the wall!"

Archie wanted to talk about clothes, but not yet.

"I say, laddie," he said, hurriedly. "Lend me your ear for half a jiffy!" Outside the baying of the pack had become imminent. "Stow me away for a moment in the undergrowth, and I'll buy anything you want."

He withdrew into the jungle. The noise outside grew in volume. The pursuit had been delayed for a priceless few instants by the arrival of another dray, moving northwards, which had drawn level with the first dray and dexterously bottled up the fairway. This obstacle had now been overcome, and the original searchers, their ranks swelled by a few dozen more of the leisured classes, were hot on the trail again.

"You done a murder?" inquired the voice of the proprietor, mildly interested, filtering through a wall of cloth. "Well, boys will be boys!" he said, philosophically. "See anything there that you like? There's some sweet things there!"

"I'm inspecting them narrowly," replied Archie. "If you don't let those chappies find me, I shouldn't be surprised if I bought one."

"One?" said the proprietor, with a touch of austerity.

"Two," said Archie, quickly. "Or possibly three or six."

The proprietor's cordiality returned.

"You can't have too many nice suits," he said, approvingly, "not a young feller like you that wants to look nice. All the nice girls like a young feller that dresses

nice. When you go out of here in a suit I got hanging up there at the back, the girls 'll be all over you like flies round a honey-pot."

"Would you mind," said Archie, "would you mind, as a personal favour to me, old companion, not mentioning that word 'girls'?"

He broke off. A heavy foot had crossed the threshold of the shop.

"Say, uncle," said a deep voice, one of those beastly voices that only the most poisonous blighters have, "you seen a young feller run past here?"

"Young feller?" The proprietor appeared to reflect. "Do you mean a young feller in blue, with a Homburg hat?"

"That's the duck! We lost him. Where did he go?"

"Him! Why, he come running past, quick as he could go. I wondered what he was running for, a hot day like this. He went round the corner at the bottom of the block."

There was a silence.

"Well, I guess he's got away!" said the voice, regretfully.

"The way he was travelling," agreed the proprietor, "I wouldn't be surprised if he was in Europe by this! You want a nice suit?"

The other, curtly expressing a wish that the proprietor would go to eternal perdition and take his entire stock with him, stumped out.

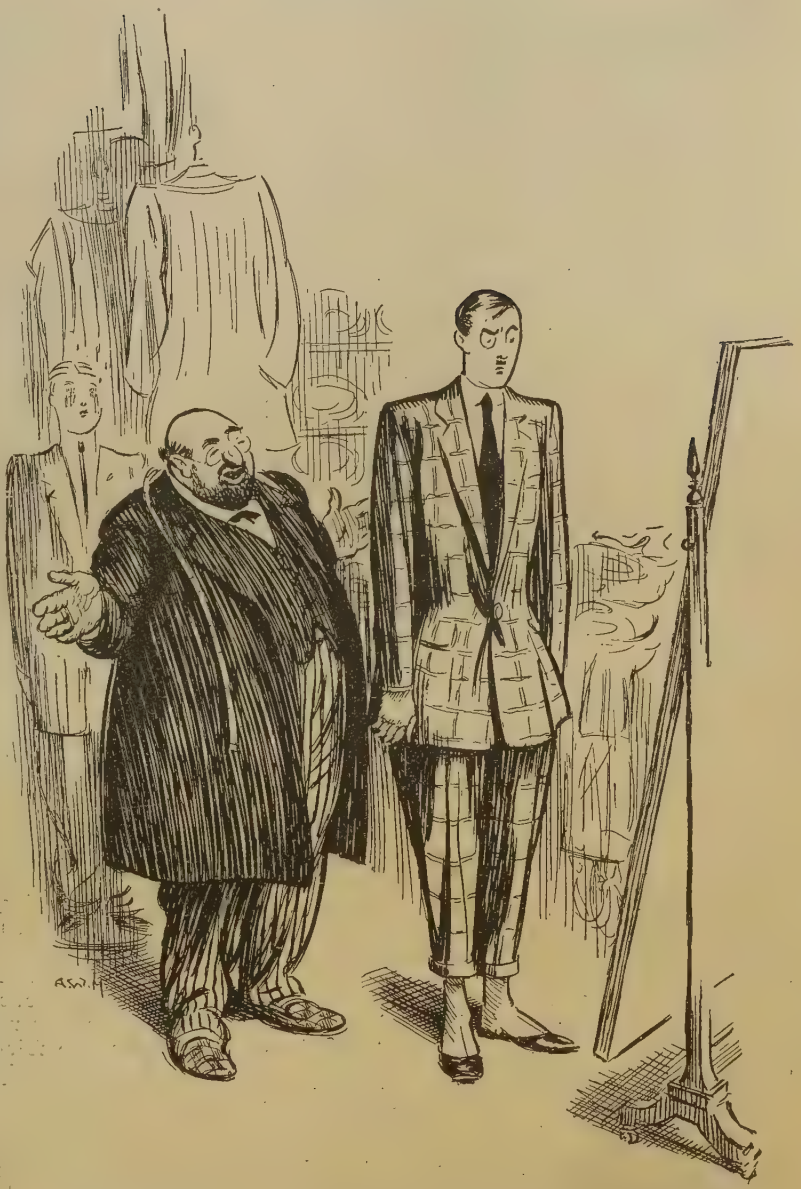
"This," said the proprietor, tranquilly, burrowing his way to where Archie stood and exhibiting a saffron-coloured outrage, which appeared to be a poor relation of the flannel family, "would put you back fifty dollars. And cheap!"

"Fifty dollars!"

"Sixty, I said. I don't speak always distinct?"

Archie regarded the distressing garment with a shuddering horror. A young man with an educated taste in clothes, it got right in among his nerve centres.

"But, honestly, old soul, I don't want to



"Why, say, your mother would be proud if she could see her boy now!"

hurt your feelings, but that isn't a suit, it's just a regrettable incident!"

The proprietor turned to the door in a listening attitude.

"I believe I hear that feller coming back!" he said.

Archie gulped.

"How about trying it on?" he said. "I'm not sure, after all, it isn't fairly ripe."

"That's the way to talk," said the proprietor, cordially. "You try it on. You can't judge a suit, not a real nice suit like this, by looking at it. You want to put it on. There!" He led the way to a dusty mirror at the back of the shop. "Isn't that a bargain at seventy dollars? . . . Why, say, your mother would be proud if she could see her boy now!"

A quarter of an hour later, the proprietor lovingly kneading a little sheaf of currency bills, eyed with a fond look the heap of clothes which lay on the counter.

"As nice a little lot as I've ever had in my shop!" Archie did not deny this. It was, he thought, probably only too true.

"I only wish I could see you walking up Fifth Avenue in them!" rhapsodized the proprietor. "You'll give 'em a treat! What you going to do with 'em? Carry 'em under your arm?" Archie shuddered strongly. "Well, then, I can send 'em for you anywhere you like. It's all the same to me. Where'll I send 'em?"

Archie meditated. The future was black enough as it was. He shrank from the prospect of being confronted next day, at the height of his misery, with these appalling reach-me-downs.

An idea struck him—the idea of his father-in-law.

"Yes, send 'em," he said.

"What's the name and address?"

"Daniel Brewster," said Archie, "Hotel Cosmopolis."

It was a long time since he had given his father-in-law a present.

ARCHIE went out into the street, and began to walk pensively down a now peaceful Ninth Avenue. Out of the depths that covered him, black as the pit from pole to pole, no single ray of hope came to cheer him. He could not, like the poet, thank whatever gods there be for his unconquerable soul, for his soul was licked to a splinter. He felt alone and friendless in a rotten world. With the best intentions, he had succeeded only in landing himself squarely amongst the ribstons. Why had he not been content with his wealth, instead of risking it on that blighted bet with Reggie? Why had he trailed the Girl Friend, dash her! He might have known that he would only make an ass of himself. And, because he had done so, Looney Biddle's left hand, that priceless left hand before which opposing batters quailed and wilted, was out of action, resting in a sling, careened like a damaged battleship; and any chance the Giants might have had of beating the Pirates was gone—gone—as surely as that thousand dollars which should have bought a birthday present for Lucille.

A birthday present for Lucille! He groaned in bitterness of spirit. She would be coming back to-night, dear girl, all smiles and happiness, wondering what he was going to give her to-morrow. And when to-morrow dawned, all he would be able to give her would be a kind smile. A nice state of things! A jolly situation! A thoroughly good egg, he did *not* think!

It seemed to Archie that Nature, contrary to her usual custom of indifference to human suffering, was mourning with him. The sky was overcast, and the sun had ceased to shine. There was a sort of sombreness in the afternoon which fitted in with his mood. And then something splashed on his face.

It says much for Archie's pre-occupation that his first thought, as, after a few scattered drops, as though the clouds were submitting samples for approval, the whole sky suddenly began to stream like a shower-bath, was that this was simply an additional infliction which he was called upon to bear. On top of all his other troubles he would get soaked to the skin or have to hang about in some doorway. He cursed richly, and sped for shelter.

The rain was setting about its work in earnest. The world was full of that rending, swishing sound which accompanies the more violent summer storms. Thunder crashed, and lightning flicked out of the grey heavens. Out in the street the raindrops bounded up off the stones like fairy fountains. Archie surveyed them morosely from his refuge in the entrance of a shop.

And then, suddenly, like one of those flashes which were lighting up the gloomy sky, a thought lit up his mind.

"By Jove! If this keeps up, there won't be a ball-game to-day!"

With trembling fingers he pulled out his watch. The hands pointed to five minutes to three. A blessed vision came to him of a moist and disappointed crowd receiving rain-checks up at the Polo Grounds.

"Switch it on, you blighters!" he cried, addressing the leaden clouds. "Switch it on more and more!"

IT was shortly before five o'clock that a young man bounded into a jeweller's shop near the Hotel Cosmopolis—a young man who, in spite of the fact that his coat was torn near the collar and that he oozed water

from every inch of his drenched clothes, appeared in the highest spirits. It was only when he spoke that the jeweller recognized in the human sponge the immaculate youth who had looked in that morning to order a bracelet.

"I say, old lad," said this young man, "you remember that jolly little what-not you showed me before lunch?"

"The bracelet, sir?"

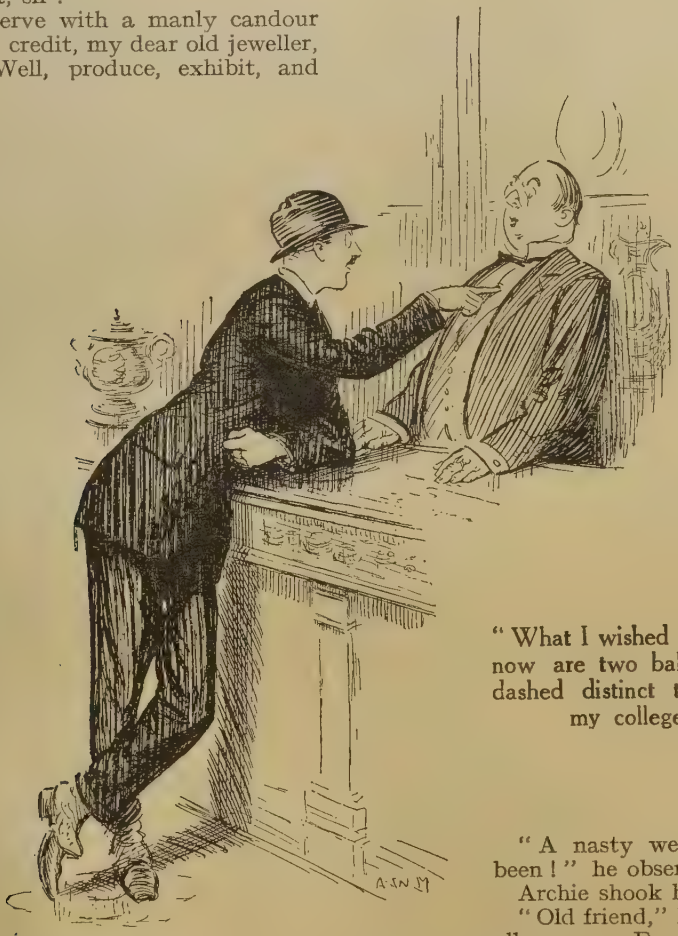
'As you observe with a manly candour which does you credit, my dear old jeweller, the bracelet. Well, produce, exhibit, and bring it forth, would you mind? Trot it out! Slip it across on a lordly dish!"

"You wished me, surely, to put it aside and send it to the Cosmopolis to-morrow?"

The young man tapped the jeweller earnestly on his substantial chest.

"What I wished and what I wish now are two bally separate and dashed distinct things, friend of my college days! Never put off till to-morrow what you can do to-day, and all that! I'm not taking any more chances. Not for me! For others, yes, but not for Archibald! Here are the doubloons, produce the jolly bracelet! Thanks!"

The jeweller counted the notes with the same unction which Archie had observed earlier in the day in the proprietor of the second-hand clothes-shop. The process made him genial.



"What I wished and what I wish now are two bally separate and dashed distinct things, friend of my college days!"

"A nasty wet day, sir, it's been!" he observed, chattily.

Archie shook his head.

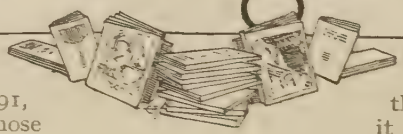
"Old friend," he said, "you're all wrong. Far otherwise, and not a bit like it, my dear old trafficker in gems! You've put your finger on the one aspect of this blighted p.m. that really deserves credit and respect. Rarely in the experience of a lifetime have I encountered a day so absolutely bally in nearly every shape and form, but there was one thing that saved it, and that was its merry old wetness! Toodle-oo, laddie!"

"Good evenin', sir," said the jeweller.

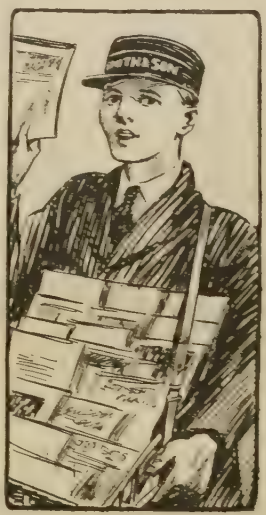
(Another P. G. Wodehouse story next month.)

"SMITH'S"

The romance of a great business



ON October 6th, 1891, two men died whose names were as familiar as household words. One of them was Charles Stewart Parnell. The other was William Henry Smith. Destiny is often bizarre, and there was certainly a large measure of irony in the fact that two men, so completely and dramatically different, should be classed together for the first time in Charon's ferry-boat. Parnell has become a figure of romance, the maker of an insistent political movement, the hard aloof autocrat, the cold calculating man of affairs who, in middle life, staked all and lost all for a woman. What a contrast was W. H. Smith, the industrious apprentice crowned with honour, the entirely modest, entirely efficient tradesman, called by his character and ability to the high councils of the State, doing always all that he had to do with all his might, dying in peace without one single enemy and amid quietly sincere and universal regret! No romantic plays have been written or will be written round the life of W. H. Smith. No poet will find inspiration in the details of his placid career. But Parnell is already almost forgotten. The struggles of his life led to nothing. The party that he created has been smashed to atoms. The name of W. H. Smith is still a household word. The man of peace has victories, more vital and more lasting than the victories of the man of war. After thirty years, few men perhaps remember the details of Mr. Smith's political life, but we are all gratefully familiar with the bookstalls that gave Mr. Smith his fortune and the consequent opportunity for national service.

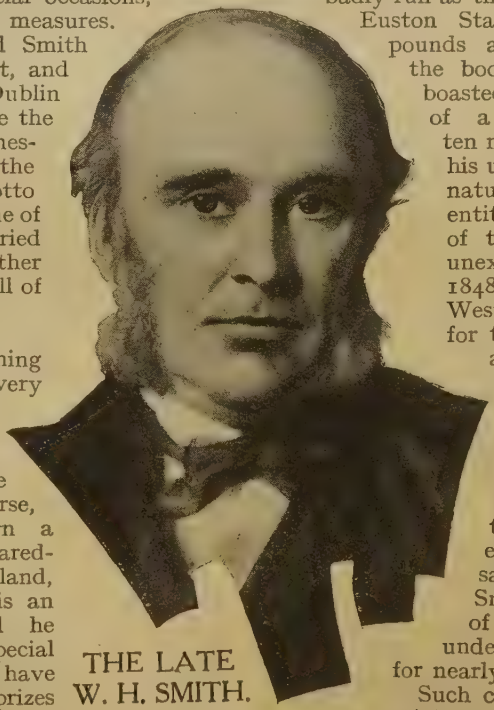


The great firm of W. H. Smith and Son celebrates its centenary this year. It is often hard to discover the "romance of business" of which one hears men talk, but there is a real element of the romantic in the history of Smith's, and it finds its expression in the achievements of its Cabinet Minister partner. The qualities that made the business made the man. The word "romance" is loosely used. It has been defined as a "tale with scenes and incidents remote from everyday life." Certainly this definition suggests troubadours and knights in armour, castles and moated granges, colour and clash and excitement. But think how "remote from everyday life" was the career of the man who began by wrapping up parcels of newspapers at four o'clock in the morning and who died in Walmer Castle, Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports, and successor of Pitt and Wellington, of the man who "stuck to his desk and never went to sea" and yet became First Lord of the Admiralty and "ruler of the Queen's navee," of the one retail tradesman in English history who ever led the House of Commons! Romance enough in this, in all conscience!

The man is dead but the business goes on, and despite its hundred years is more active than ever. It was born soon after the battle of Waterloo in a little stationer's shop at the corner of Duke Street and Oxford Street, on part of the ground now covered by the great Selfridge store. The little shop was owned by two brothers. One of them was an ordinary indolent individual (even as you and I). The other, W. H. Smith I., was a very monster of energy. He was up early and he went to bed late, finding customers and pushing his wares. Despite the indolent brother, the business grew, and in 1820 the Smiths moved to the Strand, where their headquarters have been ever since.

Newspaper distribution was a slow and cumbersome business and was entirely in the hands of the Post Office. The London papers were, of course, published in the morning, but they were not sent into the provinces by

the mail-coaches until the following evening. This meant that news was forty-eight hours old before it reached country places at any distance from town. It struck W. H. Smith I. that stale news must always be dull news and that it would be a good idea to hurry things up. There were no great Hoe presses in those days to print thousands of complete newspapers in an hour. The papers were printed first on one side by slow presses and then (when they were dry) they were turned and printed on the other side. Nowadays bundles of the earlier editions of London papers are ready for distribution soon after midnight. A hundred years ago, it was breakfast-time before they were ready. Smith undertook to distribute hours quicker than the Post Office. To do this he had to catch the morning coaches. He organized a service of swift carts to take the papers to the coach-offices, but it often happened that, when the carts arrived, the coaches had gone. When this happened, the carts galloped after the coaches and transferred their bundles on the road. For special occasions, Smith took special measures. When George IV. died Smith chartered a special boat, and the news reached Dublin twenty-four hours before the arrival of the Royal messenger. "First with the news," is still the motto of Smith's, and it was one of Smith's boys who carried to General Allenby's mother the first news of the fall of Jerusalem!



THE LATE W. H. SMITH.

FROM the beginning Smith's have been very proud of their horses. Railways and motors have supplemented, and to some extent replaced, the horse, but Smith's still own a mighty stud of well-cared-for horses. Colonel Acland, one of the partners, is an equine authority, and he makes the horses his special care. Smith's horses have carried off hundreds of prizes at innumerable shows.

Railways succeeded coaches, but Smith's were not caught napping. As early as 1847 the firm employed nine special engines for their newspaper traffic, and in this same year the first special newspaper train left Euston at five every morning. This train arrived at Beattock, forty miles north of Carlisle and then the terminus of the line, at a quarter past two in the afternoon, and from there the papers were carried on to Glasgow by post-horses. By this time W. H. Smith II., the future Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports, had joined the business and his indolent uncle had retired. The younger Smith wanted to be a clergyman, but he was persuaded by his father to elect for the desk rather than the pulpit. Something of the mind, too, something of the manner of the clergy, however, remained with him all his days, and in his Parliamentary life earned for him the half-chaffing and half-affectionate sobriquet of "Old Morality," bestowed on him by *Punch*. The first achievement of W. H. Smith II. was the conquest of the railway bookstall. Early in the history of railways the companies had allowed various local persons, often their own disabled servants, to open stalls on their stations for the sale of cheap and often nasty biscuits and gingerbread and cheap and often nastier books and papers. The majority of these men were quite uneducated, and the stalls were as badly run as they were profitable. At Euston Station a rent of sixty pounds a year was paid by the bookstall-keeper, and he boasted that he made a profit of a thousand pounds in ten months. The boast was his undoing. The company naturally felt that it was entitled to a larger share of these considerable and unexpected profits, and, in 1848, the London and North-Western advertised for offers for the sole bookstall rights all over their system. Smith's offer was accepted, and their first stall was opened at Euston on November 1st, 1848. So many improvements were made that other companies eagerly sold them the same right, and in 1862 Smith's had the majority of the English bookstalls under contracts that lasted for nearly fifty years.

Such contracts in other hands might have been abused, but Smith's handled the situation with so much energy, so much intelligence, and such unfailing impartiality that they were, and are, in their hands, a definite public advantage. The monotony of railway travelling has been dissipated by the facilities for buying almost every kind of reading matter, and, though the "railway novel" generally means the lightest

kind of fiction, it is amazing to learn how many very solid books are regularly bought just to read on journeys. Moreover, it was the Smith bookstall that pioneered the production of cheap books. In Smith's early days they had the newspapers to sell, a limited number of cheap periodicals, many solid books, but the only available new fiction were the three-volume novels —the old "three-deckers"—sold to the public at a guinea and a half. The travelling public wanted cheap fiction, and as there was no cheap fiction to be obtained from the established publishers, Smith's resolved to produce it themselves. They began in 1849 with the issue of a book called the "Railway Anecdote Book," and this was followed by the publication of the famous "yellow backs." Mrs. Gaskell's "Cranford" was the first of the "yellow backs" and it was published by Smith's in 1857. Then they purchased the copyright of Lever's novels and issued them in the same form. But having proved that there was a market for cheap fiction, Smith's soon decided to leave its exploitation to others. They had made their position as agents for all the publishers. It was a cardinal principle of their business that there should be no favouritism, and this principle would obviously be difficult to carry out if Smith's own books competed on the stalls with the books of other publishers. The issue of cheap editions of standard books as well as of easily read novels has unquestionably added immensely to the pleasure and happiness of the great public with thin purses, and the fact that the first inspiration of these publications came from the bookstalls is a justification for the assertion that Smith's contracts have been to the public advantage. Smith's solidity has also been of great service in the hazardous business of producing books. However long his other customers may keep him waiting for his account, the publisher knows that he is certain of a cheque from Smith's on the fifteenth of every month, and this is an asset that every business man will appreciate. The certainty of a good order from Smith's makes experiments possible.

COL. A. D. ACLAND.

Moreover, Smith's advice, based on unequalled experience, has been of immense service to the publisher. But the publisher has not always listened. Mr. J. G. Metcalf, former head of the Book Department (now controlled by Mr. D. Roy), has said: "I always regretted the fact that many books, poor in literary quality, attained large sales, owing to the way they were produced, and that many really good works did not sell, as they merited, owing to lack of imagination on the part of the publishers."

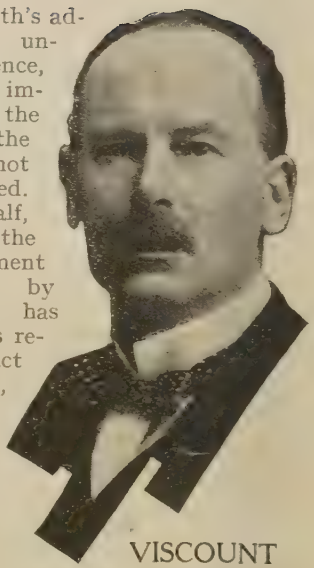
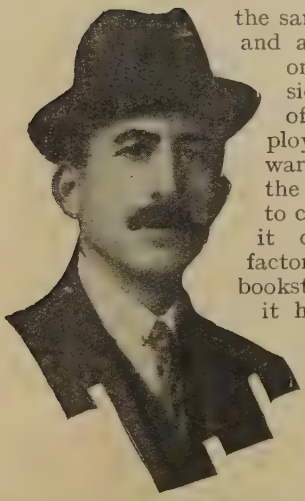


Photo. Russell. VISCOUNT HAMBLEDEN.

THE old-fashioned bookseller who was a bookworm as well as a tradesman has largely disappeared, probably because he was more a bookworm than a tradesman, and in too many cases the selling of books has become mechanical and unintelligent. Smith's have realized that books are very, very special wares, and they have encouraged their assistants to cultivate both a knowledge of books and a knowledge of men. From the first the needs of every locality have been studied and recorded. In addition, in order that the assistants should possess an intelligent knowledge of the "goods" they handle, Smith's arranged last winter for a series of lectures on literature to be delivered to their managers in the London district by Mr. Mais, now Professor of Literature at the Royal Air Force College, and these lectures have now been printed and distributed to all their assistants throughout the country.

The policy of Smith's, in its relation with its *employés*, is to give to each man the assurance of permanent employ. Practically everyone holding a position of importance in the firm has begun his career at the bottom of the Smith ladder as a half-time boy. At a luncheon given to the heads of departments before the war, the average length of service of the thirty persons present was thirty-nine years and nine months! Despite the fact that members of the staff are pensioned at the age of sixty-five, Smith's recently had fifty men still in their employ each of whom had served over forty-two years, and eleven of whom had served over fifty years. At



MR. C. H. ST. JOHN HORNBY.

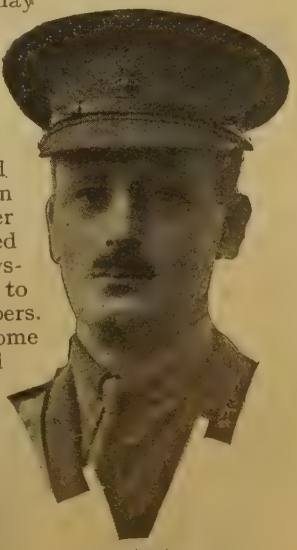
the same time a father and a son were both on the Smith pension list. The policy of the good employer had its reward when, in 1905, the firm was unable to continue, on what it considered satisfactory terms, the bookstall contracts that it had held for fifty years with the Great Western and the North-Western Railway Companies. Through the goodwill and the enthusiasm of their local *employés*, ninety-five per cent. of whom loyally elected to remain in their service, within ten weeks over two hundred Smith's shops in over two hundred towns were ready for the dispossessed staffs of Smith's bookstalls. The shops were, in appearance, made as distinctive as the uniforms of the bookstall-boys, and the business of the firm actually benefited by the new development that had been forced on it.

SMITH'S is probably the largest business in England that remains a private partnership. It is not even a private liability company. If it were ever converted into a public company there would always be the risk that the control of its shares might pass into the hands of one or other of the great publishing houses, and then its fine impartiality as a distributing agency would come to an end.

The publication of *Tit-Bits* by the late Sir George Newnes, as is well known, was the beginning of a new chapter in the news trade. Before *Tit-Bits* the popular weeklies were few and of a comparatively poor class, and their circulations were not large. The enormous circulations of *Tit-Bits* and its later imitators obviously added to bookstall sales and bookstall profits. In this connection it must be added that, for once, Smith's was without its usual prescience and its characteristic intelligent welcome of new developments. In his early days of struggle Sir George Newnes received from the great distributing firm little help or encouragement. On the other hand, the first appearance of *The Strand Magazine* found Smith's well alive to its possibilities. *The Strand* was as novel in its scheme as *Tit-Bits* had been, and its popularity was as immediate. *The Strand* publication day was prepared for by every bookstall manager as a day when business was sure to be particularly brisk, and the stalls were cleared in order to make room for copies of the magazine.

In one or two rare cases Smith's have bought from the publishers whole editions of special publications, and although they do not stock the stalls with rare and expensive books, very expensive books have been sold on occasion on the bookstalls. Mr. W. C. Smart, who is the head of the newspaper and periodical department, and who, like most of his colleagues, was for years the manager of a bookstall, once sold a book in a railway station for two hundred guineas, and this is probably a record. Mr. Smart's career is an interesting proof of what has already been said of the care with which Smith's managers are encouraged to study local needs. He was for a time stationed at Windsor, a town with a very definite character, and he was enabled at once to learn much about Windsor and to add to his knowledge of books by a friendship with the Royal librarian, Sir Richard Holmes, who permitted him to have regular access to the Royal shelves.

Something has been said of the beginnings of Smith's as a newspaper distributing agency. Nowadays early every morning Smith's vans collect vast bundles of newspapers from every Fleet Street office, calling back as each edition leaves the presses. The bundles are taken to the Strand office, where an army of men is employed all through the night packing the parcels for the various bookstalls, shops, and provincial wholesale agencies. The average number of newspapers distributed every day by Smith's from the Strand is one million one hundred and eighty thousand, weighing approximately one hundred and eighty tons. In addition another staff is employed sending out newspapers by post to individual subscribers. Smith's spend some fifty thousand pounds a year in stamping these wrappers. No man was ever less inclined to use official position for business ends than Mr. W. H. Smith. He was, for a very short



MAJOR W. H. D. ACLAND.

time, Chief Secretary for Ireland, and before taking over the office, and in order that he might not be supposed to be even actuated by personal motives, he transferred to one of his managers the contract which his firm had for the bookstalls on the Irish railways. Mr. Smith was out of office in a week, but the Irish railway contract was lost for ever.

DURING the last fifteen years Smith's have acquired an enviable reputation for their fine work as artistic book-binders. The replacement of many stalls by well-equipped shops has made Smith's perhaps the largest stationers in England. Their rapidly increasing printing business has recently been moved to fine new premises on the Duchy of Cornwall Estate. Posters designed by Smith's artists and printed in Smith's works have an established and enviable reputation. Smith's lending library is another large and comprehensive enterprise. Smith's have branches and agencies all over the world, as far away as Bagdad and Jerusalem, Shanghai and Nagasaki, Vancouver and Monte Video. The "Smith Shop" in the Rue de Rivoli in Paris has the distinction of being one of the only two English business establishments in the French capital that never closed their doors during the war, not even when the French Government moved to Bordeaux or when Big Bertha was bombarding the city by day and German aeroplanes were dropping bombs on it by night. Since the war Smith's have opened branches at Ostend and Brussels, and it is now considering a scheme for the better distribution of English newspapers all over the Continent. Smith's name has become synonymous with bookstalls, and it has had to take steps to prevent enterprising foreigners using its name in various out-of-way parts of the world. The total number of Smith's *employés* is nearly thirteen thousand, and some idea of the vastness of the business may be gathered from the fact that every week the firm receives over thirty thousand letters and postcards. Smith's are preparing to leave their old Strand home and to move to colossal premises built on the site of King's College Hospital, behind the Law Courts.

MR. A. D. POWER.

It has always been a rule with Smith's that no work shall be done on Sundays, and this rule has remained in force despite the increase in the number of Sunday newspapers and the enormous increase in their popularity. If you order your daily newspapers from Smith's you must still get your Sunday newspapers from some other agent, and it is remarkable that this policy has not affected the success of the firm in the smallest degree. It is said that this rule has only once been broken, and everyone will remember that, during the war, when the feverish anxiety of the public demanded news on Sundays as well as on every other day, the large trade in Sunday newspapers at the various railway stations was left in other hands. In his biography of Mr. W. H. Smith, Sir Herbert Maxwell says that years ago the firm received a command to supply a member of the Royal Family with his newspapers. The *Observer* was one of the papers on the list. Smith's wrote to say that unfortunately the *Observer* could not be supplied on Sunday mornings as the firm did no Sunday trading. The letter brought a visit from an indignant official, who was unable to understand how the business rule of a firm of newsagents could stand in the way of a Royal command. But Smith's were firm, and even the threat of the withdrawal of the order did not avail to change their policy.

W. H. Smith I. retired from business in 1858 and died in 1865. W. H. Smith II. gradually gave up control of the business after his first election to Parliament in 1868. He died, as has already been said, in 1891, after having held the offices of Secretary to the Treasury, First Lord of the Admiralty, Secretary of State for War, First Lord of the Treasury, Leader of the House of Commons, and Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports. He was offered a peerage in 1886 and declined the honour, but, after his death, Queen Victoria offered his widow a Viscountcy as "a public mark of my deep sense of the services your beloved husband rendered to me and to his country, services which I fear shortened his valuable life." Mrs. Smith became Viscountess Hambleden, and, at her death, the title descended to her son, who is now Smith's senior partner. The other partners are Colonel A. D. Acland, Mr. St. John Hornby, Mr. A. D. Power, and Major W. H. D. Acland, M.C., A.P.C., all men of judgment and enterprise, always approachable and generous with advice, and caring for nothing so much as the maintenance of Smith's high reputation for fair dealing.

The DEVIL CAT MEETS HER MATCH

by HENRY P. HOLT

A MULATTO moved silently on his bare feet, removing empty glasses and replacing them filled. A single paraffin lamp, smoking the rafters, shed an uncertain light upon five men who lounged in various attitudes around the dingy little room. This was Petah's. Petah's bar-room, on the South Pacific island of Taruna, is known from Pitcairn to Fiji. And some queer fish come ashore at Taruna, on occasions, most of them drifting up to Petah's for liquid refreshment.

Of the five men in there just now, four were from a steamer tied up at the ramshackle pile wharf, and the other, an Englishman named David Murchison, was awaiting, at Taruna, anything that the dice of life happened to throw his way. He held a shipmaster's ticket; but ships without masters at places like Taruna are as rare as cross-eyed monkeys in Oxford Circus. Not that Murchison was perturbed. He was one of those people who never worry and, as far as the human eye can observe, never have occasion to worry. True, he had just got out of a disastrous pearling expedition by the skin of his teeth; but in getting out he had brought over a hundred pounds with him, so he was still a good deal better off than those haughty-looking suburbanites who flock into the City every morning, trying to give the impression that they own half the railway, but who are really wondering how last month's grocer's bill is going to be paid.

"We passed close up to the Devil Cat's ship this morning, heading straight for Taruna," said the mate of the steamer.

"You mean the *Nainsook?*" queried Murchison, casually.

"Yes. It was blowing hard enough to tear the sticks out of her, but she was carrying almost every stitch of canvas she could. The Devil Cat herself told us she'd lost the mate overboard."

Murchison leaned forward, alert.

"And she's heading for Taruna?" he asked.

The mate nodded, with an odd expression. "You aren't thinking of taking the job on?"

"Why not?" asked Murchison.

The mate raised his glass, scrutinized its contents absently, and then shrugged. After all, it was no affair of his.

"She's not known as the Devil Cat for nothing," he observed. "Our old man isn't what you might call human, but he *is* a man. The poop's no place for women, anyhow."

"I always heard that she was a thundering

good sailor," Murchison replied, ' and it seems to me that's the main point for the crew to consider. Why, exactly, do they call her the Devil Cat ? "

" Oh, somebody gave her that name, and it stuck. You see, she isn't anybody's fool, and they do say there's nothing on God's earth—or sea—that she's frightened of. I remember her father, when he used to trade in these waters on the *Nainsook*. She used to sail with him, and that's where she picked up her seamanship. She could run the schooner just as well as he could ; and it's six years or more since he died. Trenton, his name was, and he used to call her Bab. But nobody else calls her Bab. It's got to be 'Cap'n Trenton,' or there's trouble. The Devil Cat doesn't put up with any funny business. No ! Not from white men or blacks. She had a crew of Tonga niggers two years ago, and after they'd laid out the mate by throwing a knife into his back they went for her. She's the prettiest shot with a revolver that you ever heard of. The first two lascars dropped dead on deck, and then the others bolted to the fo'c'sle while she attended to the mate. He got well again, all right, and they say she still keeps most of those Tonga lascars on board now because they know too much to start monkeying again. She's great on discipline—is the Devil Cat ! "

Murchison felt vaguely amused at the notion of signing on as mate of the *Nainsook*. In the first place, he had been kicking his heels long enough ; in the second, it would be a novelty to sail under a girl skipper, especially a girl who knew her job and had a will of her own. Murchison had a will of his own. The experiment might prove tedious. On the other hand, it might prove interesting. Besides, it offered an opportunity of reaching a civilized port, where a skilled master-mariner may find a ship of his own. He glanced out of the window and, in the moonlight, saw the dim outline of a double tops'l schooner sidling towards the wharf. For perhaps fifteen seconds he watched and hesitated ; and then, with a faint smile, he rose and passed out into the night.

CAPTAIN BAB TRENTON was the antithesis of what he had anticipated. He expected to find a middle-aged woman with a hatchet face and a tongue like a lash. Instead, she was not a day over twenty-six and, Murchison reflected in a flash, she was one of the most beautiful creatures he had ever seen. The girl-skipper appraised him with a single glance, inquired his business, and with a directness and forcefulness which almost took the man unawares, drew from him answers to a dozen questions germane to the situation, engaged him forthwith, and announced her intention of leaving Taruna, with the least possible delay, for Tampico.

As the newly-appointed mate went ashore for his kit he rubbed his chin reflectively. The interview had been brief and practical. Nor could he deny that it had been perfectly satisfactory from a business standpoint. But, somehow, he was conscious of being vaguely annoyed, not with her but with himself. He felt almost as though he had acted like a schoolboy. This chit of a girl—true, she was nearly as tall as he was and looked as though her muscles lacked nothing in the way of development, but—this chit of a girl had just put him through his paces as neatly as though he had been seventeen and applying for a berth as cook's assistant. And *he* had gone aboard, really, to put her through *her* paces.

" It promises," he observed, addressing the four winds of heaven, " to be either very tame or very hectic ; and I'll be hanged if I know which."

Now, Murchison was a steamship sailor, although he had spent years of his early days in square-riggers. He started, therefore, at a slight double disadvantage, inasmuch as Bab Trenton was a right-up-to-the-minute sailing skipper, and she knew by off heart every little trick and peculiarity of the *Nainsook*. No living soul could teach her a thing about the *Nainsook*, and few veteran shellbacks would have known better how to handle the craft.

In other words, Captain Trenton knew her business excellently, and Murchison decided on the second day out that he was willing to take off his hat to her and leave well alone. It was going to be a dull trip, and the sooner they reached Tampico the better. And perhaps a good many things would never have happened if the mate had not chanced to see something which was none of his business. It was neither more nor less than a pair of girl's stockings drying in the breeze. There is nothing especially interesting about a pair of stockings drying in the breeze, but Murchison incidentally noticed that the darning on this particular pair of stockings was a veritable work of art. Certain areas of them, indeed, consisted of sixty-five per cent. darning and about thirty-five per cent. of the original garment. And the *Nainsook* had called at Sydney, where perfectly good stockings can be bought a-plenty, not a month previously.

IT was just under two weeks' run to Tampico. Half-way through the first week Murchison crossed swords with the skipper. It began with the veriest trifle of a bout, but the mate was disgruntled and the

"The mate raised his glass and then shrugged. 'She's not known as the Devil Cat for nothing,' he observed."

affair developed. For one thing, Captain Bab Trenton had remained in her own quarters altogether too much for his liking. He had barely had a chance of exchanging half-a-dozen words with her, except in regard to his duties. There were other things he could have discussed, besides navigation. Moreover, even if he didn't discuss things with her, he liked to watch her.

When she stood by the weather-rail, lightly balanced, swaying to the motion of the schooner, the breeze toying with escaped strands of her wonderful hair, her eyes roaming over the porcelain rim of the ocean, she looked like some girl-Viking, fascinating and adorable, but lacking, the mate decided, in certain human qualities. Such a quality, say, as communicativeness. She was not austere, exactly. One could not even call it frigid. Indeed, she was pleasant enough when it became necessary to say anything to the mate, but his trouble was that she

didn't find it necessary to say anything to him often enough. That was the chief reason for his feeling disgruntled, and the cause of his crossing swords with her. It was the second dog watch. They had been driving the *Nainsook*, and the breeze remained steady. As soon as the skipper came up on deck and cast her eyes aloft, she frowned slightly.

"You'd better haul down your mizzen gaff tops'l," she said.

The mate's first instinct was to pass on the necessary order unquestioningly, but he remembered those three and a half days of isolation. He glanced up at the sail referred to and then at her. To disobey, or even argue with one's skipper about such a point was, of course, a thing unheard of on any ship. He would carry out orders, naturally, but if he could arouse in her for a fleeting moment some emotion directed toward himself, antagonistic or otherwise, it would be for him, so far, the one happy moment of the voyage.

"Do you think it's coming on to blow?" he asked, with the barest inflection suggesting doubt. There seemed no sign of any coming change in the weather. An extra puff, perhaps, but nothing of consequence.

THE girl wheeled and regarded him with annoyance. He noticed with a delicious thrill that there was a shade of positive purple in her eyes. It was fire that he was playing with, as Murchison well knew. The temptation to keep her keyed up to that pitch for another three heartbeats was almost irresistible. The ghost of a smile came to his lips.

"Hi, Tanyi," she called, suddenly, to the Kanaka boatswain, "haul down mizzen gaff tops'l, plenty quick. Mr. Murchison, you get off this schooner at Tampico." The latter remark, though cast over her shoulder, was incisive. Dismissal had come with breath-taking suddenness, and though Murchison had never been discharged before in his life, nothing but the disinclination to be regarded as insolent toward her prevented him from laughing outright. The Kanakas jumped to orders. Then: "That gaff tops'l is rotten, and there isn't a spare one on board, Mr. Murchison. Don't run any risks with it," the skipper remarked frigidly, turning toward the companion-way.

"Captain Trenton," said Murchison, "may I ask you one question, concerning your business and mine, without being discharged a second time?"

"Business? Yes." The girl was a veritable icicle.

"Why did you leave me on watch without telling me that gaff tops'l was rotten? I've lost my job through it, you know."

Perhaps it was because her eye caught some detail on deck which needed attention, perhaps because there was garbled truth in the man's statement, but she was a second and a half before replying.

"That isn't so," she said. "You lost your job because you're no good to me as a mate. When I give an order, it's an order, and not the subject for a debate. There," she added, as a sudden squall swept down on the *Nainsook*, causing a crackle and boom in her far-flung canvas and holding her lee-rail almost under water, "that would have carried away her weak gaff tops'l, and we'd have lost a dozen miles a day afterwards in consequence. If you're one of those sailors who must have a sworn affidavit from the weather experts ashore before you know the wind's going to freshen, you'd better get ashore and sell chestnuts. Take in your main gaff tops'l, to'gal'n-s'l, and flying jib."

SMARTING bitterly, Murchison clenched his hands; but, in spite of the girl's taunts, he was an admirable ship's officer, and even Bab Trenton was astonished at the way he handled the Kanakas until the *Nainsook* was snug and riding easily. Within half an hour he realized that some uncanny weather-sense had told the skipper what was coming.

Half a gale was blowing by midnight, and Murchison, noting the schooner's skittish behaviour, with holds almost empty and ballast cut down to the minimum, wondered vaguely how she would fare if really bad weather struck her.

The wind eased considerably, however, by dawn, and the *Nainsook* was redressed until she left a boiling wake astern. Captain Bab Trenton, who, being a woman, was entitled to more moods than one, astonished Murchison by spending half an hour chatting with him as if they had been, if not old, at least comparatively good friends. For one thing the sudden improvement in the weather had raised her spirits considerably. She had anticipated far worse, and even now was none too sure what lay in store. The mate, who had intended leaving the *Nainsook* at Tampico, anyway, could well afford the luxury of forgiving his employer for dismissing him. As a matter of fact, he reflected, her course had been fully justified. He also reflected that her teeth were as two rows of matchless pearls; that her skin, in spite of sun and wind, was like velvet; and that the violet hue only came into her eyes when she was angered. The poise of her head was a thing to fascinate a sculptor; though the *Nainsook's* mate was no sculptor, it had that effect upon him. He felt himself on figurative quicksands. His sole object

"'Put that thing down and leave this job to me!' the man shouted, facing her."

had been to tease her, rather than be a nonentity on board, but now he was content for the moment to bask in the sunshine of her presence. His sheet-anchor was dragging.

DAVID MURCHISON came to the conclusion that there was nothing of the cat nor of the devil in Bab Trenton. She was nimble-witted, and skilfully parried his every effort to bring conversation around to

personal lines. She was just a girl who, with splendid efficiency, was earning her livelihood at a hazardous calling, and had been given her nickname because she was clever enough to strike at the right moment, in the right way, when necessary. It was unsafe enough, anyway, for her to tramp those ocean wildernesses with a crew of blacks. In such a situation she needed a mate who would stand behind her, or in front of her if necessary, like a granite wall. Her voice was exquisitely musical, Murchison decided. He could have listened to it for hours, wholly thrilled; but just at the point where the mate made up his mind that he was going to love her for ever and ever, she ordered him to set the rotten gaff tops'l again, and retired to her own cabin.

But if he expected Bab Trenton to be equally condescending next time they met on the poop, he was doomed to disappointment. He spoke to her of trading possibilities, which he did understand, and she barely paid attention. He made direct suggestions for her benefit and, in other words, she told him to mind his own business.

And Murchison, being neither invertebrate nor under fear of being discharged, suddenly put his head back and laughed heartily, whereupon, if eyes could but have slain, David Murchison would have wilted and withered up into nothingness. Being solid, however, he did nothing of the sort; but from that moment a state of stark war existed between them. The girl snapped necessary orders at him like the cracking of a whip, and Murchison delighted both in carrying out those orders as no mate on board the *Nainsook* had ever done before, and in ignoring the girl-skipper's studied disdain.

There were moments when there came a clash of wills which brought fire into the eyes of both—the purple hue of anger into those of Bab Trenton and the light of mastery into those of the man. Never, after that first momentary hesitation in carrying out orders, did he question her complete authority as captain of the *Nainsook*. The mastery over her that he made her feel was an infinitely deeper matter. It was purely a personal thing, and just as Murchison never allowed it to interfere with his duties as mate, the girl never exercised her authority as skipper to crush him. For the girl was a girl, and human nature is inexorable.

The mate had almost forgotten the sixty-five per cent. of darning in the stocking and the fact that there was no spare gaff tops'l on board to replace the rotten canvas in case it blew away; but a dozen days on board brought several similar things to his notice, and the climax came when Tanyi, the coloured boatswain, informed the mate that the crew were going to leave the ship at Tampico unless their wages were paid.

It came as a smashing revelation to Murchison. For the first time, it really dawned on him that all was not well, in a financial sense, with Bab Trenton, and he winced at the idea. Not that there was anything remarkable about it. Murchison had been on South Sea trading craft too often not to know how that sort of thing can happen. The contents of the ship's safe dwindling, one or two unsuccessful trips, an unexpected bill for repairs after a gruelling which barely left the vessel afloat, food for all hands to provide continually, and then the eternal problem of wages mounting up.

"Crew get their wages at Tampico," Murchison replied, steadily returning the black's gaze, and wondering how in the name of pink thunder he was going to broach the matter to Bab Trenton.

But the opportunity he sought never arose. Before his watch was up, gusts of wind began to tear out of the sou'-west like shells from a ten-inch gun. Gradually the gusts lengthened, until the *Nainsook* was being pounded by a living gale. The Kanakas were jumping to obey the mate's orders when the skipper came on deck. She watched Murchison, without interference, until all was snug. Then :—

"This is what I've been anticipating for days," she sang out, to the mate. In trying to make her voice heard above the wind's scream in the rigging, she put her face closer to his than it had ever been. The sea was rising rapidly and the schooner cavorted. Holding on to a stanchion, the girl-skipper swayed slightly. Murchison steadied her for a second with a strong hand on her shoulder.

"She'll ride it out like a duck," he shouted back. He knew that she had no doubt on the point. Before Tanyi had spoken to him it would never have entered Murchison's head to offer such a comment.

THROUGHOUT that night and all through the next, the *Nainsook* withstood the onslaught, grey swirling torrents sweeping over her deck.

Murchison remained on watch constantly, refusing to snatch even forty winks, but eventually Bab Trenton peremptorily ordered him below, where he slept for several hours, only to be awakened, as is the way with sailors, on feeling a different movement of the ship. The *Nainsook* was pounding and rolling, but she had changed her course.

Murchison, wide awake in an instant, slipped up on deck. The wind had abated somewhat, but a terrible sea—one vast expanse of racing, white-capped, watery

mountains—was running; and the mate caught sight of a vessel wallowing and rolling in the trough, straight ahead, two or three miles away. It was a steamer, and something was wrong, diabolically wrong, with her. She appeared to be entirely out of control, and lay broadside on to each avalanche of water. But, worst of all, she was evidently perilously near the sinking point, for she lay so low in the water that her well deck was practically submerged all the time. Murchison could see that some signal had been flown, but the bunting had all become ribbons. He turned to Bab Trenton, who was standing on the poop, levelling her binoculars at the distressed vessel.

"She's pretty nearly a goner," he said. "Can you see anybody on board?"

The girl shook her head and handed him the glasses. For a full minute he glued his eyes on the steamer, which they were now rapidly nearing. An abandoned ship wrecked on the shore usually inspires the landsman with vague melancholy; but an abandoned ship, adrift on the ocean, has a vastly different effect on the mariner who sees it. The chance to salvage a steamer is one of those things that sea-captains dream about, with blissful ideas of the wealth it would bring; but such things rarely happen outside of dreams. Murchison looked searchingly at the girl, and he saw that she shared his own suspicions.

"It's only about a hundred miles to Tampico," he said, "and the gale's half spent."

"I can't make her name out," replied the skipper, using the binoculars once more. "She's so low in the water."

"She's over two thousand tons," said the mate, screwing up his eyes.

Then the steamer rolled her bow clear for a few moments.

"The first three letters are L a z," the girl said, eagerly. "Oh, yes, *Lazette*. I don't know her. But she's a plum well worth picking. Get the longboat ready, Mr. Murchison. You'll have to handle it carefully with a sea like this running."

Murchison did not move. A wave thundered against the schooner's side. Fiercely-driven spume smacked their oilskins and stung their faces. The girl turned to the man in blank amazement.

"That longboat wouldn't live sixty seconds," Murchison declared, slowly, with a curiously set face.

They were alongside the steamer now.

"*You yellow cur!*" the skipper sneered. "After this, keep out of my sight till we get ashore. I'll go myself. Tanyi, drop that boat overboard."

WITH his face still set strangely, Murchison went forward, while Tanyi and the Kanakas were loosening the longboat's lashings. They had just got her ready to launch when the mate returned. Bab Trenton was watching him closely. An exclamation of chagrin came to her lips when she saw that he was bearing a heavy axe. Divining his intention, she slid her hand beneath her oilskin for something that was always handy, day and night. Murchison raised the axe to crush in the side of the boat. There was a sharp crack and a bullet whizzed across the deck, but the axe smashed its way through a plank, and the longboat was useless.

The bullet had passed through the fleshy part of Murchison's arm, but he ignored the wound. Again the girl raised her revolver. There was a tense moment during which Bab Trenton felt her trigger finger tightening.

"Put that thing down and leave this job to me!" the man shouted, facing her.

"Leave it to *you!*" She laughed bitterly. "And what, under God's heaven, does a white-livered coward like you think you can do now? See, there's a mist coming up, so we sha'n't even be able to stand by her till the sea goes down. And I didn't ask you a second time to row across. I was going *myself*. There isn't a nigger on this boat hasn't more pluck than——"

He came back to the poop, although the girl still had the revolver in her hand, and silenced her roughly with a gesture.

"I said, leave this to me," he declared, fiercely, staring squarely at her. A puzzled frown swept over the girl's face, and there came the faintest twitch of her mouth as her eyes fell on a dark stain on the mate's sleeve where the bullet had gone through.

He turned on his heel and dived down the companion-way. Several minutes elapsed before he returned, with one of his pockets bulging and a life-belt strapped around him. In his hand he held a length of thin line, one end of which he fastened to his waist. Handing the line to Tanyi, he gave the boatswain careful instructions, and as soon as the schooner was dead to windward of the steamer he slipped over the side and became lost in a welter of churning foam.

All this Bab Trenton watched with very little outward sign of interest. It was only when the man actually disappeared into the wildly turbulent sea that her expression changed. Then she herself took the wheel and held the schooner up into the wind. Her strong brown hands gripped the spokes nervously, for the plunging schooner was perilously near the other vessel, and a collision would have been disastrous. Every added second that he remained in the water

multiplied the chances against the choking human being trailing astern, battling for something more than his own life.

"He was right; no boat would have lived in this," she muttered. "God grant that he wins through!"

And human nature being what it is, the thought of salvage became entirely banished from her mind for the space of several limitless minutes. Now and again she caught sight of Murchison perched momentarily on the crest of a wave. He was nearing the steamer. It would be miraculous if he were not dashed to pieces against its steel plates.

"Slack away that line, Tanyi," she called out at last, and several fathoms of the rope slipped through the black's hands. It was touch and go now. Everything depended on the degree of strength Murchison still had—that, and chance. A giant wave toyed with the schooner, pouring an overwhelming torrent over her entire length, and passed on at racing speed, leaping like some remorseless living monster towards the man whose life now hung by a single hair. Bab held her breath. The wave crashed broadside on to the steamer, which became engulfed. And then the half-swamped *Lazette* emerged slowly from the tumult, after the fashion of some wounded sea monster struggling to the surface for air.

Wild exultation surged through Bab Trenton. Murchison was on the steamer's deck, spent and exhausted doubtless, but he was living. She could see him move, clutching one stanchion after another until he reached a place of comparative safety. The heavy wave had swept him on board, and the line around his waist saved him from being carried beyond.

"Now and again she caught sight of Murchison on the crest of a were not dashed to pieces

Working his way aft, Murchison made fast the line that was dangling in the water between the two vessels, and Tanyi lowered away a manila hawser, which Murchison drew to the steamer. Then he waved his arm as a signal to proceed, and disappeared into the after wheel-house. A few minutes later the sails of the *Nainsook* were bellying,

the hawser tightened, jerked, and came nigh to snapping. There was a steady strain. Slowly, painfully, the *Lazette* swung out of the trough, and the two vessels were moving. A few knots an hour was all they made, but

wave. He was nearing the steamer. It would be miraculous if he against its steel plates."

Tampico was only a hundred miles away from the *Nainsook's* dancing prow. Each time a wave larger than the rest careered past the schooner and hurled itself upon the *Lazette* Bab turned and watched with an anxious face.

"And," she said aloud once, "I called him yellow!"

It was dawn on the following day before, stiff and weary, she handed the wheel over to Tanyi and went below for something to eat. Land had just been sighted. The moment she entered her cabin her eyes fell on an envelope addressed to her. Nobody on board but Murchison could have put it there. Her fingers were not quite steady as she tore it open. Inside was a brief note and something else. The note said:—

I'll do it, if I can; but in case I don't there's enough money enclosed to pay the crew at Tampico. They're getting nasty. Three weeks ago the *Lazette* was reported with cholera on board, so keep well off her if you tow us into port. I'm taking some disinfectant with me, and I'll soak in it, so I'll be all right.

You're going to marry me, Bab, sooner or later, so make up your mind to it. And if you make up your mind soon you might run the Union Jack up to the masthead so that I can see it.

Yours ever,
DAVID MURCHISON.

Bab read it all through again, and then, going over to a locker, selected a strip of bunting. With a queer feeling in her breast she raised it to her lips, and hastily slipped up on deck. With her own hands she fastened the flag to the signalling halyard and raised it in a ball to the masthead. At last she gave a tug. The flag "broke" and fluttered in the breeze.

In the after wheel-house of the derelict astern, a grim smile came over the features of a man whose eyes had been fixed on the schooner's masthead ever since dawn had first shown him its faint blur. That flag was telling an old, old story in a new way.

She who Came Back

by

F. Britten Austin

Illustrated by W. R. S. Stott.

&

THE clock upon the mantelpiece struck, discreetly, the hour of eleven into the night-stillness of the study where old Henry Arkwright worked. He glanced up with busy, preoccupied brows to the dial, confirming his half-registered impression of the tale of strokes. Eleven o'clock! He would work for another two or three hours yet. He sucked cheerfully at his pipe as he signed the just-written counsel's opinion; folded the stiff, long documents and tied them neatly with their original tape; took yet another legal case from the pile in front of him. He felt himself in form to-night, enjoyed the efficiency of his brain that worked so swiftly and surely in this solitude. The complete silence of the house was subtly grateful to him. He was immune from all disturbance. The servants had long since gone to bed. His concentration upon his task was unthreatened, the stores of legal knowledge held ready for his use in that practised brain of his unobscured by any concrete trivialities. Eleven o'clock—yes, he could put in another three hours' good work before, exhausted to-night like all the other nights, he went slowly up the empty stairs to his empty bedroom. He adjusted himself to consideration of the affidavits he unfolded.

What was that? The faint ringing of the door-bell, far away in the servants' quarters but distinctly audible in this sleep-hushed house, persisted until it came to his full recognition. He looked up, puzzled. Who could it be at this time of night? He listened to it with exasperated annoyance, resentful of this interruption of his labours, trying to imagine an identity for this inconsiderately late visitor. Whoever it was, he himself would have to open the door. The servants were long ago asleep. They would not hear the bell. With a petulant exclamation, he rose from his desk, went out into the darkened hall, fumbled hurriedly for the electric switch. Then, the lights full on, he went quickly to the door and opened it. A cold wind blew in upon him from the darkness into which he peered, seeing, at first, nothing. The ringing had ceased. A doubt of reality, a suspicion of hallucination, shot through him, was dispelled upon the instant. From the shadowed side of the porch a woman's form moved into the broad beam of light. A curious, inexplicable, sudden consciousness of his own heart, vaguely not normal in its action, filled his breast as he stared out to her in a momentary suspense of recognition. Then she turned her face full upon him.

He started back, shocked to his inmost as though he had touched a live electric-wire.

"Christine!" he gasped, in incredulous amazement. "Christine! *You!—Come back?*"

The eyes in the woman's drawn face opened upon him as from a tight-shut agony, searched what was to her his dark, featureless silhouette in the illumination from the hall. Her whole soul seemed to yearn out to him in doubt and in desperate appeal. He saw her lips move before she spoke.

"Will you let me in?" she asked, humbly. "Harry!" She breathed his name as though she dared not pronounce it.

He felt himself turn dizzy under this unexpected emotional shock. He stared at her dumbly, the scathing phrases of indignant repudiation, so often mentally rehearsed for such a moment, eluding him. Christine! He could not at once adjust himself to her reality, looked at her again to make unmistakably sure. Christine—come back!

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"'Harry!" she breathed again, in timid humility.

He shuddered in a cold gust from the darkness as he stared at her. She was hatless, coatless, in that bitter wind. He saw her shiver as she half-ventured to stretch out a hand towards him.

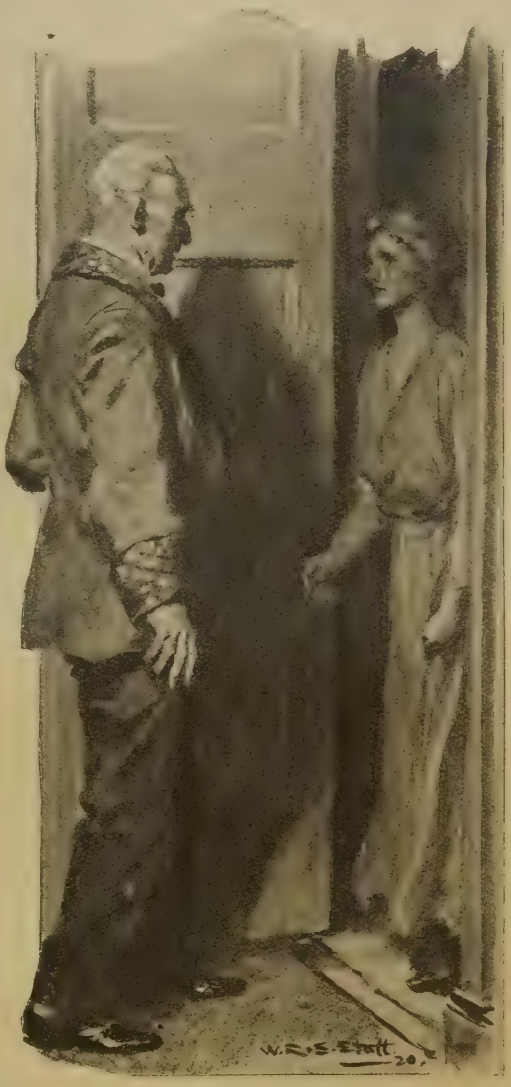
A sudden impulse, as from a source superior to him—he thought it was pity—mastered the righteous indignation he had been trying to bring to utterance.

"Come in," he said, thickly, and made way for her.

SHE entered. He shut the door behind her, turned to look at her as she stood in the full illumination of the hall. Once more her eyes had closed. Her lips were compressed as over an almost unendurable agony of the spirit. She swayed on her feet, arms limply by her sides, as though only stayed from falling by a supreme effort of the will. How old and haggard she looked!—the thought traversed him like a flash, linked itself to another—twenty-five years! What had happened to her in that twenty-five years? Little of good fortune, assuredly—with the professional eye that appraised a new witness in the box, he noted the poor, threadbare quality of her white dress, unadorned by any of the jewellery that had once been her delight.

The chilled blueness of her skin struck him as he scrutinized her. He touched her hand, automatically and impersonally, for confirmation of his impression.

"You're frozen!" he said. His accent of ill-humour rang oddly familiar in his own ears. It was the old annoyance at yet another of the impulsive follies so typical of her. "What are you thinking of, to come out like this?" he added, sharply. "Here!" He flung open the study door. "There's a fire here—sit down and warm yourself!" The tone of unsympathetic authority was—he remembered it—instinctively just the old tone he had so often used to her in that life now so remote as almost to seem a previous existence.



"'Christine!' he gasped, in incredulous amazement. 'Christine! You!—Come back?'"

She opened her eyes again, the large emotional eyes that had not changed, looked at him, looked *into him*. Incredulity spread over her face.

"By your fire? Can you, Harry? Can you, after everything—after all these years—can you still have me by your fire?"

Tears came up in those big eyes which looked so yearningly into his, and her mouth twisted itself into a pathetic little smile—the ghost of the smile that he had known in a younger face. He felt oddly uncomfortable.

"Come along!" He commanded her almost brutally, defending himself from any relaxation of hostility. "Come and warm yourself!" He lifted one of her hands, and its chill struck to the centre of him. "Why have you no coat? You must be mad!"

She smiled at him, and did not answer. He drew her into the warm study, pulled a chair close to the fire for her, pressed her down into it. Then he turned to switch on the full lights.

She stopped him with a gesture.

"Please, Harry! Just like this—in the firelight."

He obeyed and returned to her. Coldness seemed to emanate from her body as he came close. What sheer insanity! She must be chilled through and through, he thought.

He shrugged his shoulders to himself, disclaiming responsibility, and, for his own self-respect, played the host.

"Can I get you anything, Christine?" he asked, ungraciously. "Anything to eat or drink?"

She lifted her large eyes towards his face and shook her head slowly, without a word.

Baffled by her manner, he struck at what he thought to be the heart of this awkward situation.

"What do you want? What have you come for?" he demanded, harshly. "Money?"

She shook her head again and smiled.

"No, Harry. I want nothing, except just to be with you once again—for a little time."

A long sigh, from the depths of her bosom, escaped her as she turned her head down again to the fire and stared dreamily into its red recesses.

"Just to be with you," she repeated, softly, as to herself—"once more."

He stood over her, not knowing what to say. Silence filled the room.

She looked up at him timidly.

"You're not pleased to see me, are you, Harry? You never wanted to see me again?"

He did not answer.

"Of course—how could you be?" she murmured to herself, gazing once more into the fire. "You never could forgive—never!"

He forced himself to a politeness he felt to be magnanimous.

"I don't want to dwell on past injuries, Christine," he said, coldly. "I should be pleased to know that what you did brought you happiness."

"Happiness!" she repeated, almost inaudibly, in ironic mockery, her gaze still fixed upon the fire.

Suddenly she looked round to him.

"Harry!" she said, impulsively. "Harry!" Her eyes went beyond him for a moment to the litter of papers on his desk, returned to him. "Harry! I know I am disturbing you"—the old pathetic smile came into her face—"but I want to ask you a favour"—she hesitated, as though her courage failed her—"the favour for which I came."

He hardened himself for a refusal.

"What is it?" he asked.

"I want you to give up your work for just one hour—I want you to sit by the fireside and talk to me. Won't you? Won't you let me come first for just this once—as—as I used to want to in the old days?" Her eyes, fine as ever, implored him in almost irresistible appeal. "I have dreamed of this for so long!" She went on as in a reverie, after a little pause, staring once more into the fire. "You never would, Harry—and perhaps—if you had——" She sighed. "You were so ambitious!"

He stood immobile, typically reluctant to break his habits. Those cases were important. He was coming to himself now, the effect of the first shock diminishing. Some of the old anger awoke in his heart as he looked down upon her. The old sense of disturbance returned. It was just like her to come and break up his night's work. And now—after all that had happened! He resented her presumption, stigmatized it as sheer callousness.

She looked up, feeling his thought perhaps.

"Harry! Can't you—for just this once? I don't ask you to forgive."

Her eyes held him, enfeebled his resistance.

"I've got nothing to tell you, Christine," he said, gruffly. "Nothing. I didn't ask you to come back; but since you have come—well, I will not shut you out in the cold. You can sit by the fire if you like."

She smiled—the little ghost of her twenty-year-old smile upon that worn and middle-aged face. He clenched his teeth at it, at something in himself.

"Have you really nothing to say to me, Harry? Not a question to ask?"

He armed himself against the pathos of her appeal.

"No," he said, curtly. "Nothing." She shut her eyes as though under a blow. Then, with a tacit admission of its justice, she smiled up at him again. Evidently her courage was held at high tension.

"I know I don't deserve it," she said. "I don't deserve to be sitting here again, after all these years. But oh, Harry, you *could* be generous—once, at those rare times when I could really touch the real you as I so often longed to do. Are you still hard, Harry—still so hard?" She sighed wearily, turned her head hopelessly once more to the fire.

He watched the play of its glow over her features, was struck by her bad colour. The coldly-observant part of him noted the fact that she was, or had been, ill. Half-starved, too, added this detached, professional self. Suffering, physical and mental, was stamped upon her face. He acquiesced in it, grimly. Her frivolous wickedness—he remembered the callously-jaunty tone of the note she had left for him—had met just retribution. He wondered what had happened to the man.

She looked up again, answering, with a subtle perception, the question in his mind.

"He's dead, Harry—dead years ago. Very dead. To me, he never really lived—

not as you have lived, always, through every moment of my "—she paused—" my hell."

A sentiment of pity pricked him sharply. Poor little Christine! She had certainly paid, and paid heavily. He repressed his commiseration, in alarm at himself. He must think—think sensibly. Did she intend to come back for good? He reacted violently against the idea. It was impossible. He would be a laughing-stock, the butt for the pointing fingers, the sly allusions, of his fellows in the Courts. His pride revolted. No, no—he must get her out again somehow, before the servants knew.

Once more she read his thought.

" No one shall know that I have come, Harry. It's just for this one hour, and then I'll go again. But just for this one hour—Harry!" She stretched out her arms to him. ' Be generous!"

He fenced stubbornly.

" What, exactly, do you want, Christine?"

She smiled at him, her face radiant.

" I want—I want just to pretend that it all never happened. I want, just once, to sit with you by the fireside as though I had been here all these years—as though you and I had learned to be the comrades I had dreamed we should be. I want to sit with you as we should have sat, both of us now growing old, looking back on all the beautiful things of our life together. Harry!" She lifted her arms to him again, yearning out to him. " Just once—just once to pretend—to be as we might have been—and then I can go away and really and truly die, satisfied. Be generous, Harry; be generous just this once, if you never are again."

An obscure feeling stirred in him, a sense of tears that threatened as he looked down into the eyes that swam with moisture.

" You nearly broke my life, Christine," he said, with a hardly-achieved attempt at harshness.

" I want to forget it," she answered. " To believe—for just one hour—that I made your life, as I wanted to help make it. Oh, Harry, Harry, I love you—I have always loved you, wherever I have been and whatever I have done—and I want to believe, oh, for just such a little minute, that my love was not really in vain. I just had to come!"

He pressed his hand over his eyes, did not answer.

She pointed to the comrade chair by the fireside.

" Harry—Harry, dear—sit down and talk to me as we ought to have been able to sit and talk—old married lovers with never a cloud between us."

" Oh—don't!" he said. " Don't, Christine!" He burst out with a sudden anger. " Why have you come back? I—I wanted to forget, forget always."

She reached for his hand, touched it with fingers that were still cold.

" And we are going to forget—going to forget it quite, for just a little hour, Harry, Harry, darling!"

Her voice, on the old remembered note of fondness, touched him with a strange power. Something crumbled in him.

He sat down suddenly in the indicated chair, stared, he also, into the fire.

" It's a bitter mockery, Christine!"

" No," she answered. " It's the real thing—for just once—the real thing."

THEY sat in silence for long moments where the clock ticked loudly. She stretched her hand out to him.

" Harry! Hold my hand in yours—like you used to do—in the old days before you married me. It will help, so much. Can you remember it—the old touch that used to thrill?"

He obeyed without a word, took her little palm between his two large hands, pressed it close. Its deathlike coldness struck to him and, in defiance of it, he emphasized his contact. With a sudden tenderness that was awkwardly unpractised, he endeavoured to instil a little of his own warmth into it. As he did so he felt, as it were, a sluice-gate open in him. A long-repressed sentimentality asserted itself, invaded his lonely soul like a flood. He looked at her. If only—his protective secondary personality, dominant for so many years, reacted jealously, perverted his regret—if only she could have understood him a little more!

It was she who spoke.

" I'm so proud of you, Harry—so proud of your success!"

He almost started—remembering how he had hoped that she would read his name in the newspapers, in a vindictive desire that she should regret what she had thrown away. He saw, suddenly, that it was only her opinion that had ever really mattered to him.

" My dear," he said, feeling himself a tolerant old man who could afford to be kind from his altitude, " perhaps if I had never known you I should never have worked so hard."

She smiled at him as though there were no irony in his words, but only a beautiful truth.

" Harry—Harry, darling!" she murmured. " I have helped—helped a little, haven't I? My love has been what you said it would be—the vital force on which you could always draw? Do you remember that, the night we were engaged?"

This cool assumption of a dream, utterly opposed to the facts, startled him. He looked at her, and had not the heart to contradict. Suppose it had been so? Could he surrender himself to this make-believe

which she was playing with an almost childish simplicity? It was suddenly very tempting to him.

"I remember, my dear—and I promised"—his voice broke a little while he hesitated on a self-reproach—"never, never to cut myself off from it—never to say the harsh word which you warned me would freeze your sensitive little soul."

"And you never have, Harry," she murmured, softly. "You've always remembered—always been gentle and kind and loving—all these long years of happiness together."

His eyes felt sympathetically uncomfortable as he looked into hers, moist in the firelight.

"Twenty-seven years, dear," he said, caressingly, consciously defiant of the jealous self that watched. He had taken the plunge. "Twenty-seven years last week since we married."

She nodded her head in acquiescence.

"We've had our lifetime, Harry, dear—and we have not wasted it, have we? Every year has been full, full to the brim, with sympathy and love." She sighed, gazing into the fire. "And that's the only thing in life that matters—the only thing. Success without love would have been very barren to you, wouldn't it, Harry?" Her eyes came round to him.

"Dead Sea fruit, my darling"—the illusion was almost perfect to him, the irony without bitterness, scarcely perceived—"dust and ashes at the core." He smiled at her from a strangely sentimental self that was almost foreign to him and yet his own. "Christine, without you I should not really have lived."

She answered him with a movement of the fingers, now warm between the hands still holding them.

"Nor I, Harry, without you. You and I were each other's Destiny."

He, too, nodded his head solemnly.

"Yes, dear," he agreed. "I believe that."

"And, thank God, we have not thwarted it, Harry. We have enjoyed it to the full."

He pressed her hand tightly for his only answer. Dream or reality, was it? He had almost lost the power to distinguish. He looked into her face, softly happy and somehow nobler and purer than he had ever known it, pressed her hand again in a vague necessity to substantiate the tangible actuality of her presence. It was really Christine sitting there, filling that usually empty chair, breathing with slight rise and fall of her bosom as she gazed into the fire. And if the other were a dream—the happy past that she called up in imagination—just an old man's dream, why he would allow himself, that sentimental self in him that none but himself had ever seen, the happiness of the illusion to the full. There was none to ridicule him for a childish make-believe unworthy of his dignity.

"Christine," he said, gently, "are you happy?"

She smiled at him upon her sigh.

"Very happy, dear."

AGAIN there was a silence between them. Presently she looked up once more.

"It's splendid the way Phil is getting on, isn't it, dear?"

He glanced at her from his own dream, uncomprehending. She went on, as though discussing a subject thoroughly familiar.

"Do you remember we said we would call him Philip—our first boy—long before we had him? When we used to talk about him, in those first happy months of being together, it didn't seem possible that it could ever be really true, did it, dear? And yet, there he is—twenty-four years old! It's difficult for me to think that I ever could have been his mother. When I look at him, so tall and big, it seems impossible that he could once have been my baby."

He stared at her. What was she talking of? They had never had a child. Then it came to him.

"Yes, dear. He's a fine chap."

She smiled at him gratefully.

"I think we were right to let him marry, don't you, dear? I know he's very young—but it's perhaps better than if he waited until he became set in his own habits and could no longer share the youthful high spirits of his dear little wife—as you very nearly waited too long, didn't you, dear? Another year or two of getting wrapped up in your own ambitions, and you might have crushed all the young life out of me." Her tone was dreamily sincere.

"Don't, Christine!" he said, thickly. "I know a lot of it was my fault——"

"Sh—h!" She soothed him with a gesture of her disengaged hand. "We're talking about Phil and his charming little wife. She's just the sort of girl I would have chosen for him, Harry. Young, sensible, pretty, with eyes that look you straight in the face—and she loves him, Harry, like I loved you, with all her young soul."

He made a little choking sound and pressed her hand—so warm and loving now!—with a convulsive tightness.

"And soon, Harry," she went on, "we shall be grandparents, you and I—looking forward beyond the next generation to the one after—*living forward*. Life is very wonderful, isn't it, dear, in its continuity? Our little lives cease, but something of us goes on and on, in generations that we can't even imagine. Oh, it's very wonderful!"

"Harry! Hold my hand in yours—like you used to do—in the days before you married me."

She sighed. "To think we might have missed it all, if we had not loved!"

"Christine!" He could scarcely speak. "You're torturing me!"

"'Sh—h!" she said. "It's all real—it's all real *now*. Everything else was a bad dream, from which we have waked together."

"If only we could keep awake!" he said, pressing her hand in his as though he would never let it go.

She looked at him archly.

"You were always pessimistic, Harry, weren't you? Do you remember how you used to say we should never have the little girl for whom we longed, just because we longed for her so much? And now there's Jeanie! Jeanie who'll be having her twenty-first birthday in a month or two! And you are proud of her, aren't you, Harry? Of course you are! We are both proud of such a daughter, just the daughter we imagined!"

He closed his eyes.

"I remember—I remember how we used to talk of the daughter we were going to have. It seems very long ago, Christine, those first months of our life together."

She smiled.

"And there she is, all our dreams of her come true, asleep upstairs and very likely herself dreaming of the woman's life that is opening before her. She's very real to you, isn't she, Harry?"

He forced himself to speech with an effort.

"Yes, dear. Go on."

"She's worth all the anxieties we had with her—the anxieties we never imagined. Do you remember, when she was a little golden-haired prattler, that awful time when she was ill? Do you remember how I nursed her, night and day—and how you would come tip-toeing to her tiny cot and look down upon it, praying with all your soul that she would not die? I think that was when you first began really to love her very much, Harry—when you thought you might lose her." She nodded her head in dreamy reminiscence, staring into the fire. "I remember how proud I was when you gave up your work for a day or two because you felt you could not leave the house while she was in danger. It was such a miracle for you to do that—like Joshua stopping the sun—and all because of our tiny little Jeanie. It made me love you, oh, ever so much more, Harry!"

"Go on!" he said, closing his eyes again. "Go on!"

"And then how proud of her you were while she was at school! She always had your brains, Harry, didn't she? Always she was at the top of her class. I remember"—she smiled—"I used to fear that she might grow too clever and wear spectacles. But there was just that bit of me—of the frivolous me—in her, wasn't there, Harry? And so, just like her mother, she grew up to like pretty frocks and look as charming in them as I used to want to look for you to admire me."

"Never so charming as you used to look, Christine, when you were twenty-one," he said, his eyes lighting up with a genuine memory. "No one could look prettier than you did."

Her warm fingers curled in his hard hands and her smile came up to him.

"Thank you, dear. It is nice of you not to forget."

He breathed a long sigh.

"For every day of twenty-five years, Christine, I have seen you as you used to look then." There was an emphasis in his subdued and deliberate enunciation that was eloquent of past agonies.

"It was the real Christine, Harry, that twenty-one-year-old Christine who was so proud to be your wife and knew herself to be so unworthy of you."

"No, no!" he said, hoarsely. "Not unworthy—I didn't understand then. If only I had understood—if I had not been so absorbed in the things I wanted to do——"

"'Sh—h!" she soothed him. "It was all very beautiful, our life together, Harry, dear. Do you remember the holidays we had alone together? Do you remember Switzerland and the great mountains that towered up behind our hotel, the snow upon their summits orange against deep blue in the first sunshine of the dawn? Do you remember the mountain stream with the big boulders where we ate sandwiches on a little patch of turf between the rocks and you kissed me just as those other people came down the path? I remember—I remember how I went hot all over and yet was very proud and happy, because it was the first time that anyone else had ever seen you loving me. You used to pretend—do you remember?—to be a little cold and distant towards me when we were in company, your dignity much too big to admit that you were in love."

"Don't, Christine—don't!" he murmured, the breath of a soundless sob escaping him in a broken exhalation. "If only we had had them—those holidays we meant to have!"

"We did, dear," she pursued. "We did have them. They're all there—among our dreams. Look at them and you will see that they are true. The memory of them isn't spoilt by anything that was not just right. Can't you call them up again—the holidays we used to promise ourselves for the days when you were successful? Can't you see them? Can't you see

"You shall not go, Christine! You have come back—and you shall not go again!"

that lovely time in Italy—the big blue lake, with the yellow houses and the red roofs close under the mountains and fairy islands in the middle? Don't you remember the bridge in Florence where you stopped and said: 'This is where Dante

met Beatrice '—and we looked into each other's eyes and knew that we too were a Dante and Beatrice, born for each other's love? Don't you remember, dear? Can't you see them, all those wonderful years together, when you and I were young?"

"Christine, Christine!" he murmured. "If only they were true!"

"They are true, dear—they are true," she asserted. "They are the truest things we have—the dreams of our souls which they will dream again and again long after we have no body. And not only holidays—our life together had work in it, too, didn't it, dear?—hard and successful work. Do you remember the big case which made you famous?"

He nodded, a smile of genuine reminiscence on his face.

"The Pembroke case?"

"Yes, dear," she continued, "the Pembroke case. Do you remember how hard you worked then?"

"By Jove, I do!" he agreed, with an emphatic little laugh. "I never worked so hard in my life!"

"Do you remember how I used to sit by the fire here at night, not daring to make the slightest sound, while you worked at your desk, going through all those masses and masses of papers in readiness for the next day of the trial? Do you remember how sometimes you would look up, not saying a word, but just assuring yourself that I was still there and going on with your work all the fresher because you saw me? Do you remember when at last, in the small hours, you finished for the night, you would come across and kiss me, oh, so quietly, and lay your head against me for comfort because you were so tired?"

HE did not answer. His eyes stared into the fire, his lips thinned in a tight pressure against each other, as the mental picture of the fact came up in conflict with this ideality. They had been terrible, those nights of solitary work.

She continued, undeterred.

"And then, on the last day of the trial, when you had made that great speech—the first big speech of your career—and got your verdict, the night when all the newspapers were full of your triumph, do you remember your home-coming, dear?"

"By Heaven, I do!" he interrupted, with a sudden outburst of bitterness. "I came home and looked around me—and wished that I were dead in the hopeless emptiness of it all!"

"No, dear, no!" she corrected him. "You came home and found me waiting for you in my prettiest dress and we had dinner together, just you and I alone, because the moment was so big that we couldn't possibly share it with anyone else. Do you remember how solemn we tried to be, you and I—you looking so dignified in your evening clothes and I just as dainty as I could be? And then suddenly you jumped up like a schoolboy and darted round the table to kiss me—and we kissed and laughed at ourselves and kissed and laughed again, every time the servants went out of the room—a couple of happy children. And I loved you so much because you were so very clever and yet could be such a boy. And then we got solemn again as the bigness of it all came over us—real, real success at last! The paths of all the world seemed open to us, didn't they, dear? And we drank to it, success and love! And then, quite close, and looking into my eyes, you said the loveliest thing of all the lovely things you ever said to me—you said that your great success, the one success that really mattered to you, was that you had won my love, my real, real love that bound my soul to yours for ever. Oh, Harry, I would have died for you that night!"

She ceased and he was silent. The might-have-been came up before him with intolerable vividness. If one could but begin over again!

"And now," she gently moved her hand that all this time had lain in his as they crouched close together over the fire, "and now here we are—all the years of hard work, so successful that we need not worry any more, behind us—nothing really important to do except to sit hand in hand and dream over the happy past, an old Darby and Joan who have lived their lives——"

He jumped to his feet.

"Christine! Christine!" he cried. "Let us make it true! Let us forget—forget all the bad dream—go on again together just as if what you said were true!"

She looked up at him, a strange and awful fear coming into her eyes, the face that had gained colour going ashen once more.

"Oh, Harry!" she said, in a tone of infinite reproach. "You've broken it! You've let go my hand!"

He ignored this infantile remark, went straight to his point in the brutally overriding manner characteristic of him.

"Let us forget it, Christine, forget that you ever went away from me. I'll never remind you of it. We won't argue past responsibilities. We'll start afresh. Christine, I'm a lonely old man—I want you. I want you to sit by the fire with me, to talk over, if you like, the might-have-beens that we threw away, I as much as you. I want you, anyway. I can't bear loneliness any more—not now, after you have come back to me!"

She rose to her feet also, shivering, her

eyes closing, biting at her lower lip as though in suppressed pain. She shook her head.

"No, Harry—not now. I—I must go away now, go back."

She turned, and moved with a curious detachment from him that reminded him somehow of a sleep-walker, towards the door.

He jumped in front of her.

"You shall not go, Christine! You have come back—and you shall not go again!"

She opened anguished eyes at him.

"Harry," she said, in a tone of profound melancholy, "you know you cannot keep me like that. Remember the last time you tried to hold me caged behind a closed door!"

He did remember—the day when, disapproving of some intended excursion, he had, in a cold passion, turned the key upon her—the day he had come back to find a broken lock and a curt note. He had learned his lesson. He stood aside from her path, entreated instead of dictating.

"Stay with me, Christine! Stay with me!"

She shook her head.

"I cannot," she said. "I must go back. It was only for one little hour I came. We have had it, Harry, and I must go."

"But you will return? I shall see you again?"

She smiled a wan smile at him.

"Who knows, Harry?"

"Where are you going? Where do you live?"

"Please, Harry! ask no questions. Let me go."

There was a dignity about her which silenced him. He opened the door for her and they went out into the hall. In a dazed preoccupation, he went up to the outer door and opened it to the night. Then he turned and perceived her coatless condition.

"Good heavens, Christine, you can't go out like that! Wait a minute. I'll lend you my fur coat. It's better than nothing."

He darted into the adjoining clothes-lobby, returned with the garment. The hall was empty, the door still open. She had gone.

He ran out and down the drive after her, crying her name: "Christine! Christine!" There was no response, neither sound nor sign of her. She had vanished.

BITTERLY disappointed, he returned to the house, closed the door behind him.

As he went into the clothes-lobby to replace the unneeded coat he was startled by the telephone-bell.

He hastened to the instrument, picked up the receiver.

"Hallo! Yes—yes—what is it? Who are you?—*the police?*" He repeated the last word in a tone of bewilderment, listened.

"Yes," he replied, "yes—Mrs. Christine Arkwright—yes—that is my wife—yes——"

The silence of the empty hall seemed to envelop him as he listened. He interjected an impatient exclamation.

"Yes!—you found a letter and traced me—yes!—Go on!—What is it all about?"

He frowned, contorted his face as though the distant voice was not clearly audible.

"What?—what do you say?—died suddenly?—I don't understand. Where was this?"

He nodded, as though now receiving more intelligible information.

"No—I don't recognize the address at all! What sort of place is it?—Oh, a second-rate boarding-house. Well, I think there must be some mistake—what?"

He listened again.

"No," he persisted, categorically. "I say I think there must be some mistake. You say that a Mrs. Christine Arkwright died suddenly in a second-rate boarding-house—at that address I don't know—and you've traced me out. I quite understand all that. But I say I have good reason to think there is a mistake somewhere—it couldn't be—— What?"

He smiled with a grim superiority as he listened.

"What? You say there's no doubt of the identity?"

His brows puckered suddenly in the frown with which he prepared the annihilation of a stupid and stubbornly insistent witness.

"Now, pay attention, my friend! When did this event occur?" He asked the question in the tone of one confident of establishing an impossibility by a counter fact. There was a moment of pause—and then his expression changed. "To-night?—*at eleven o'clock?*"

The clock in the study struck, discreetly, twelve.

[*Messrs. Myers, Gurney, and Podmore, in their great work, "Phantasms of the Living," which, leaving Spiritualism on one side, analysed and summarized seven hundred and two well-authenticated stories selected from the great mass submitted to them, arrived at the conclusions* (1) *that "apparitions" of a deceased person at or near the moment of death were a fact—the mathematical odds against the* ACCIDENTAL *coincidence of the hallucination with the death in the cases analysed being forty million billion trillion to one;* (2) *that such "apparitions" were in all probability an illusory image called up before the beholder by the telepathic effort of the dying person, an impression which carried with it some at least of the contents of the dying person's mind. The hallucination is, of course, as "real" while it persists as any other impression upon consciousness.*]

PERPLEXITIES.

By HENRY E. DUDENEY.

521.—CHANGING PLACES.

In the issue of this magazine for November, 1917 we gave a puzzle (No. 380) under this name in which, on a reduced chessboard of sixteen squares, a white rook and knight changed places with a black rook and knight without any piece attacking one of the opposite colour. Judging from the large number of letters that reached me, from home and foreign correspondents, concerning it, the problem was found unusually

interesting. I will here remark that the number of moves originally required (seventeen) has since been reduced to fifteen

I have now received from Mr. G. M. Hardie a variation that I hope may be found equally attractive. It is required to make the rooks change places, and also the bishops change places, by moving alternately white and black, without any piece ever attacking or being attacked by one of the opposite colour. What are the fewest possible moves?

522.—THE REPEATED QUARTETTE.

If we multiply 64253 by 365 we get the product 23452345, where the first four figures are repeated. What is the largest number that we can multiply by 365 in order to produce a similar product of eight figures with the first four figures repeated in the same order? There is no objection to a repetition of figures—that is, the four that are repeated need not be all different, as in the case shown.

523.—THE VICTORIA CROSS.

We have shown elsewhere how innumerable puzzles may be devised on the Greek, St. George, or Red Cross, so familiar to us all, composed as it is of five equal squares assembled together. Let us now do homage to the Maltese or Victoria Cross. Cut the cross shown into the fewest possible pieces that will fit together and form a perfect square. Of course, there must be no trickery or waste of material, since the holder of the much-prized V.C. decoration does everything on the square. It is not quite so difficult as may appear, and the reader will have no trouble in discovering the exact proportions of the symmetrical cross as given.

524.—ANOTHER UNSOLVED ENIGMA.

Here is another of those little things that one is always hearing propounded, without any answer being forthcoming. It is said to be by "a former Archbishop of Dublin," but then we must remember that when the authorship of these enigmas is lost it is quite usual to ascribe it to some bishop, known or unknown!

When from the Ark in Noah's time
The beasts came forth in pairs,
Who was it first who heard the sound
Of boots upon the stairs?

As the Flood was before my time, I am quite unable to give the answer.

525.—A WALKING PUZZLE.

A man set out at noon to walk from Appleminster to Boneyham, and a friend of his started at 2 p.m. on the same day to walk from Boneyham to Appleminster. They met on the road at five minutes past four o'clock and each man reached his destination at exactly the same time. Can you say at what time they both arrived?

Solutions to Last Month's Puzzles.

518.—THE DAMAGED MEASURE.

Let the eight graduation marks divide the 33in. measure into the following nine sections: 1, 3, 1, 9, 2, 7, 2, 6, 2, and any length can be measured from 1in. up to 33in. Of course, the marks themselves will be at 1, 4, 5, 14, 16, 23, 25, and 31 inches from one end. The other solution is 1, 1, 1, 1, 6, 6, 6, 6, 5.

519.—THE FIVE VOWELS.

The word containing five successive vowels is COOEEING. Everybody knows that to give the Australian bush cry is to "cooee."

520.—THE TWENTY-FIVE-UP PUZZLE.

The best number to call is either 2 or 3, because, if you thoroughly understand the game, it is 5 to 1 in your favour against another absolutely correct player. With any other number the chance of winning is 2 to 1. The reason is this: the only throw that can beat the call of 2 is 5, and the only throw that can beat the call of 3 is 4. In every other case there are two winning throws. The two important numbers to score, if you can, are 7 and 16, for in either case you win, no matter in what position the die lies.

LEST YOU FORGET!

NEXT month's issue will be our special Christmas Number, and as it also happens to be our 30th Birthday Number, we are celebrating the occasion by producing what we think readers of THE STRAND will agree is one of the best issues of the magazine ever put before them. Among the many famous contributors are:—

A. CONAN DOYLE
ETHEL M. DELL
E. PHILLIPS OPPENHEIM
P. G. WODEHOUSE
W. W. JACOBS
F. BRITTEN AUSTIN
"SAPPER"
BARRY PAIN

"THE WOMAN TURNED ROUND WITH A SUDDEN BURST OF PASSION. 'DO YOU THINK YOUR SPARE MONEY, AS YOU CALL IT, WILL BRING BACK JOE—THE HUSBAND I LOST WHILE YOU STAYED FLIRTING WITH THIS HUSSY HERE?'"

Mr. Cray's Adventures

No. I

THE DONVERS CASE

By

E. PHILLIPS OPPENHEIM

Illustrated by SABBEY

THE long Continental train drew slowly into Victoria Station, and through a long vista of wide-flung doors a heterogeneous stream of demobilized soldiers, nurses, "Wrafs," and other of the picturesque accompaniments of a concluded war flowed out on to the platform. The majority lingered about to exchange greetings with friends and to search for their luggage. Not so Mr. James P. Cray. Before the train had come to a standstill, he was on his way to the barrier.

"Luggage, sir?" inquired a porter, attracted by the benevolent appearance of this robust-looking, middle-aged gentleman in the uniform of the American Y.M.C.A.

"Checked my baggage right through," Mr. Cray replied, without slackening speed. "What I need is a taxi. What you need is five shillings. Let's get together."

Whether he was serving a lunatic or not, the five shillings was good money and the porter earned it. In exactly two minutes after the arrival of the train Mr. Cray was on his way to the Milan Hotel. The streets were not overcrowded. The driver had seen the passing of that munificent tip and gathered that his fare was in a hurry. They reached the Milan in exactly nine minutes. Even then Mr. Cray had the strained appearance of a man looking into futurity.

He stopped the man at the court entrance, fulfilled the latter's wildest dreams with regard to emolument, and presented himself eagerly before the little counter.

"Key of eighty-nine, Johnson," he demanded. "Get a slither on."

"Why, it's Mr. Cray!" the hall-porter exclaimed, after a single startled gaze at the new-comer's uniform. "Glad to see you back again, sir. Here's your key, sent over half an hour ago."

Mr. Cray snatched at it.

"Any packages?" he demanded over his shoulder, as he made for the lift.

"A whole heap of them, sir," was the reassuring reply. "All in your room."

Mr. Cray slipped half a crown into the lift-man's hand, made pantomimic signs with his palm, and they shot upwards without reference to the slow approach of a little party of intended passengers. Out stepped Mr. Cray on the fourth floor, and his face beamed as he recognized the valet standing before number eighty-nine.

"Hot bath, James," he shouted. "Set her going."

"Certainly, Mr. Cray, sir," the man replied, disappearing. "Glad to see you back again."

"Gee, it's good!" the new-comer exclaimed, dashing into the bedroom. "Off with the ornaments."

No convict ever doffed his prison garb with more haste and greater joy than did Mr. James P. Cray divest himself of the honourable though somewhat unsuitable garments for a man of his build which he had worn for the last twelve months. The absurd little tunic looked shorter still as it lay upon

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the bed, his cowpuncher hat more shapeless than ever; his ample breeches—they needed to be ample, for Mr. Cray's figure was rotund—collapsed in strange fashion as they sank upon the floor. Naked as the day on which he was born, Mr. Cray strode shamelessly into the bathroom.

"Get me some clothes ready out of those packages, James," he directed. "Bring a dressing-gown and underclothes in here. Get busy."

Then for a quarter of an hour Mr. Cray steamed and gurgled, splashed and grunted. His ablutions completed, he dried himself, thrust his legs into some white silk pants, drew a vest to match over his chest, and trotted into the next room. He was still in a hurry.

"Dinner clothes, James," he ordered. "Slip over a white shirt. Speed's the one and only."

"You're in a hurry, Mr. Cray," the man observed, smiling, as he handed him over his garments.

"I've been in a hurry for twelve months," was the feeling reply.

Ten minutes later, Mr. Cray left the room. The strained expression was still in his face. He rang for the lift, descended like a man absorbed with great thoughts, walked through the grill-room, climbed the stairs, passed through the smoke-room, and reached the bar before he slackened speed.

"Why, it's Mr. Cray!" one of the young ladies declared.

"Two dry Martinis in one glass," Mr. Cray directed, reverently. "Just a squeeze of lemon in, no absinthe, shake it till it froths."

The young lady chatted as she obeyed instructions. Mr. Cray, though a polite man, appeared suddenly deaf. Presently the foaming glass was held out to him. He raised it to his lips, closed his eyes, and swallowed. When he set it down, that look had passed from his face. In its place shone the light of an ineffable and beatific contentment.

"First drink in twelve months," he explained. "Just mix up another, kind of quietly, will you? I'll sit around for a bit."

"MR. CRAY! Mr. Cray! Mr. James P. Cray!"

Mr. Cray, who was engaged in a lively conversation with a little group of old and new acquaintances, broke off suddenly in the midst of an animated chapter of reminiscences.

"Say, boy," he called out, "who's wanting me?"

The boy advanced.

"Lady to see you, sir, in the hall," he announced.

"Have you got that right, my child?" Mr. Cray asked, incredulously.

"Mr. James P. Cray, to arrive from France this evening," was the boy's reply.

"That's me, sure," the person designated admitted, rising to his feet and brushing the ash from his waistcoat. "See you later, boys. The next round is on me."

Mr. Cray made his contented but wondering way into the lounge. A tall and very elegant-looking young woman rose to her feet and came to meet him. Mr. Cray's eyes shone and his smile was wonderful.

"Sara!" he gasped. "Gee, this is great!"

"Dad!" she replied, saluting him on both cheeks. "You old dear!"

They went off arm-in-arm to a corner.

"To think of you being here to welcome me!" Mr. Cray murmured, ecstatically.

"And why not?" the young lady replied. "If ever anyone deserved a welcome home, it's you. Twelve months' work in a Y.M.C.A. hut in France is scarcely a holiday."

"And never a single drink," Mr. Cray interrupted, solemnly.

"Marvellous!" she exclaimed. "But was that necessary, dad?"

"Well, I don't know," he admitted. "I guess they don't all know how to use liquor as I do. Some of the lads out there get gay on nothing at all. So the day I put the uniform on, I went on the water-wagon. I took it off," he murmured, with a reminiscent smile of joy, "an hour and a half ago. Where's George?"

"Sailed for the States yesterday."

"You don't say!"

Sara nodded.

"He's gone out to Washington on a Government commission. He'd have been here—sent all sorts of messages to you."

"Not ashamed of his disreputable old father-in-law, eh?"

"Don't be silly, dad. We're all proud of you. George has said often that he thinks it fine for a man of your age and tastes to go and work like that. What are you going to do, dad, now?"

"Order dinner for us two, I hope, dear."

"Just what I hoped for," she declared. "I think it's wonderful to have our first evening together. What are your plans for the future, dad? Are you going to stay over here for a time?"

"Why, I should say so," was the prompt reply. "You've heard what's got the old country?"

"You mean about Wilson?"

"Gone dry!" Mr. Cray exclaimed, in a tone of horror. "All the bars selling soft drinks. Tea-fights at the saloons, and bad spirits at the chemist's. That's what the old women at home did while we were out fighting."

'I'm afraid mother was one of them," Sara observed.

"Your stepmother's crazy about it," Mr. Cray acknowledged. "She's president of half-a-dozen prohibition societies. She's now working the anti-tobacco stunt."

"She doesn't say anything about coming over, I suppose?" the young woman asked, a little timidly.

"I should say not," Mr. Cray replied, with a little shiver. "She's too busy over there."

Sara slipped her hand through her father's arm.

"We'll have a lovely time for a month or two, dad," she said. "You know how happy I am with George, but this English life is just a little cramped. I suppose I must have a little of your wandering spirit in me, dad. Anyhow, for just these few months let's see a lot of one another. You're just as fond of adventures as ever, aren't you?"

A slow smile parted Mr. Cray's lips, a fervid light shone in his eyes.

"Sara," he whispered, "after the last twelve months I'm spoiling for some fun. But you, my dear—you're Lady Sittingbourne, you know. Got your husband's position to consider and all that."

She laughed in his face.

"You can cut that out, dad, for a time," she said. "Come along, now. We'll talk over dinner. I'm nearly starving, and I want to know if you've forgotten how to order."

AS they took their places at a table in the corner of the restaurant, Sara exchanged friendly greetings with a girl a short distance away, who was dining alone with a man.

"Lydia Donvers," she whispered to her father. "Lydia's rather a dear. She was at that wonderful school you sent me to at Paris. She's only been married a year."

"They don't seem to be living on a bed of roses exactly," Mr. Cray commented, glancing at the young man. "Seems all on wires, doesn't he? Has he had shell-shock?"

Sara shook her head.

"I don't think he did any soldiering at all," she replied. "He volunteered once or twice, I know, but he couldn't pass the medical examination. He was in one of the Ministries at home."

Cray's interest in the couple evaporated. Without being a gourmand, he loved good cooking, civilization, the thousand luxuries of a restaurant de luxe. He ordered his dinner as he ate it, slowly and with obvious enjoyment.

"'Key of eighty-nine, Johnson,' demanded Mr. Cray. 'Get a slither on.'"

Nevertheless, he happened to be looking across the room when a small page-boy in black livery approached the adjoining table and presented a note to Donvers. He saw the look in the young man's face as he received the envelope, tore it open, and glanced at the card inside. Mr. Cray forgot his dinner just then. It was as though tragedy had been brought into their midst. The young man spoke to the girl hesitatingly, almost apologetically. She answered with pleading, at last almost with anger. Their dinner remained untasted. In the end, the man rose to his feet and followed the boy from the room. The girl remained.

"Queer little scene, that," Mr. Cray whispered.

Sara nodded.

"I can't think what's the matter with Lydia," she said.

"Kind of annoyed at having their little feast broken into, I guess," her father murmured, soothingly.

Sara said nothing, and for some moments her father sought and found oblivion in the slow consumption of a perfectly cooked *sole colbert*.

"Gee, this fellow is the goods!" he murmured, appreciatively. "If you'd seen what they've been giving us over there! Good solid tack enough, but after the first month everything tasted alike. Thought I'd got paralysis of the palate."

"And nothing to drink, dad?"

"Not a spot," declared Mr. Cray, with frenzied exaltation.

"I'm worried about Lydia," Sara confided.

"She does look struck all of a heap," Mr. Cray assented.

"I'm going across to speak to her, if you don't mind."

"Sure!" Mr. Cray acquiesced, with his eye fixed almost reverently upon the grouse which the *maître d'hôtel* was tendering for his inspection.

"Don't wait for me, dad," she begged.

"I won't," he promised. . . .

Mr. Cray ate his grouse with the slow and fervid appreciation of the epicure, an appreciation unaffected by the fact that within a few yards his quick sensibility told him that words of tragedy were being spoken. It was obvious that Sara's friend was confiding in her, and it was obvious that the confidence was of tragical interest.

In the midst of it all, the young man who had been called away returned. He had the look of a man making a strong effort to control his feelings. Mr. Cray, who had seen much of life during the last twelve months, recognized the signs. Not a word was audible, but when Sara, after her friend's husband had been presented to her, engaged him in earnest conversation, Mr. Cray began to understand.

"A little job for me," he murmured to himself, as he sipped his champagne. "Pity about Sara's grouse, though."

She returned presently, and it was obvious that she had much to say. Mr. Cray was firm.

"Not a word, Sara," he insisted, "until you have eaten your portion of grouse. Charles here has kept it hot for you. Not a word! I'm the stern father about that bird. What you've got to say will keep ten minutes."

Sara obeyed. She generally obeyed when her father was in earnest. It was not until she found herself trifling with a soufflé, a dish for which her companion had no respect whatever, that she was permitted to unburden herself.

"Lydia is in great trouble, dad," she confided. "There is something wrong with her husband. She doesn't know what it is, but he came home a fortnight ago looking as though he had received a shock, and has never been the same man since. This is the third time he has been fetched away from a restaurant by a page in that same livery."

"I saw you talking to him when he came back."

She nodded.

"I asked him right out what was the matter with him, and I told him about you, dad—told him how clever you were at getting people out of difficulties, and how you didn't mind a little risk if there was an adventure at the back of it. I think I impressed him. He says he can promise you all the adventure you want, and they are coming here to take their coffee."

"If this isn't some little burg!" Mr. Cray murmured, ecstatically. "Just two hours under the fogs and the wheel begins to turn!"

THE arrival of Gerald Donvers and his wife, just as coffee was being served, did not seem likely to contribute in any way towards the gaiety of Mr. Cray's evening. The young man at close quarters seemed more distraught than ever. He ignored his coffee, but drank two glasses of liqueur brandy quickly. His wife scarcely took her eyes off him, and Sara's attempts to inaugurate a little general conversation were pitifully unsuccessful. Mr. Cray took the bull by the horns.

"Say, Mr. Donvers," he began, "Sara here tells me that you're up against a snag somewhere. If there's any way I can be of service, just open out. You and I are strangers, but anything my daughter says

goes, so you can count on me as though I were an old friend."

"You are very good," the young man replied, without enthusiasm. "I am in a very terrible position—through my own fault, too. I am to attend a sort of investigation to-night, and I am invited to bring any friend I like who isn't connected with any of the Services. If you'll come along I'll be glad, but I tell you frankly that I don't think the shrewdest man in the kingdom would be of any service to me."

"That sounds hard," Mr. Cray observed, "but if I'm not butting in I'll come along, with pleasure. What time is this showdown?"

"We shall have to leave in five minutes," the young man answered, with a little shiver.

Mr. Cray withdrew the bottle from his companion's reach.

"Take my advice and leave the strong stuff alone," he said. "If your trouble's as bad as it sounds, you'll want your head clear." . . .

Donvers became no more communicative in the taxi-cab which drove them presently to a gloomy house in one of the southern squares. They were admitted by a soldier man-servant, who ushered them into a sombrely-furnished library on the ground floor. A man who was seated at a desk—a grim, soldierly-looking person in the uniform of a colonel—glanced up at their entrance and nodded curtly. Seated in an arm-chair was a pale-faced young woman in widow's weeds, who turned her head away at their entrance.

"You have brought a friend?" the Colonel inquired.

Donvers nodded in spiritless fashion.

"Mr. James Cray—Colonel Haughton. Mr. Cray is an American and has not been in England for a year."

Colonel Haughton touched a bell by his side.

"Show the young lady in," he directed the soldier-servant who answered it. "How much of this affair do you know, Mr. Cray?" he added, coldly.

"Not a diddle," was the emphatic reply. "I wanted Mr. Donvers to put me wise on the way down, but he said he'd rather leave it to you."

Colonel Haughton made no reply. There was a knock at the door and a young woman was ushered in. She was fashionably dressed, and her face was familiar enough to anyone studying the weekly papers. Mr. Cray recognized a compatriot at once. The woman in the chair glanced up at the girl and then away. Every now and then her shoulders shook. The Colonel pointed to a chair.

"Will you be seated, Miss Clare?" he said. "You gentlemen please yourselves. I propose to recapitulate this unfortunate case for your benefit, Mr. Cray. I have my own idea as to the course which Donvers should adopt."

"Go right ahead," Mr. Cray invited, genially. "I'm kind of cramped in the legs with travelling to-day, so I'll take an easy-chair if there's no objection."

"During the war," Colonel Haughton said, speaking in sentences of sharp, military brevity, "Donvers here held an appointment in a certain British Ministry. It was his duty frequently to bring despatches of great importance to a branch of the War Office over which I presided. On one occasion, Donvers appears most improperly to have broken his journey at Miss Clare's flat in Clarges Street."

"There was no breaking the journey," Donvers interrupted. "My instructions were to deliver the despatches into your own hands, and when I got to the War Office you were out for an hour. I went up to have tea with Miss Clare instead of waiting in the office."

"Mr. Donvers left his wallet of despatches hanging in Miss Clare's hall," Colonel Haughton continued, "a disgracefully careless proceeding. When he found me at the War Office that evening, he handed me two envelopes instead of three. He said nothing to me about the third, but, realizing the loss, returned to Miss Clare's flat and searched his own rooms. Miss Clare knew nothing about the missing despatch; Donvers could discover nothing in his rooms. In the meantime, a prisoner in the Tower was shot at midnight that night. The contents of the letter which never reached me would have saved him."

The woman in mourning began to sob. Donvers wiped the perspiration from his forehead.

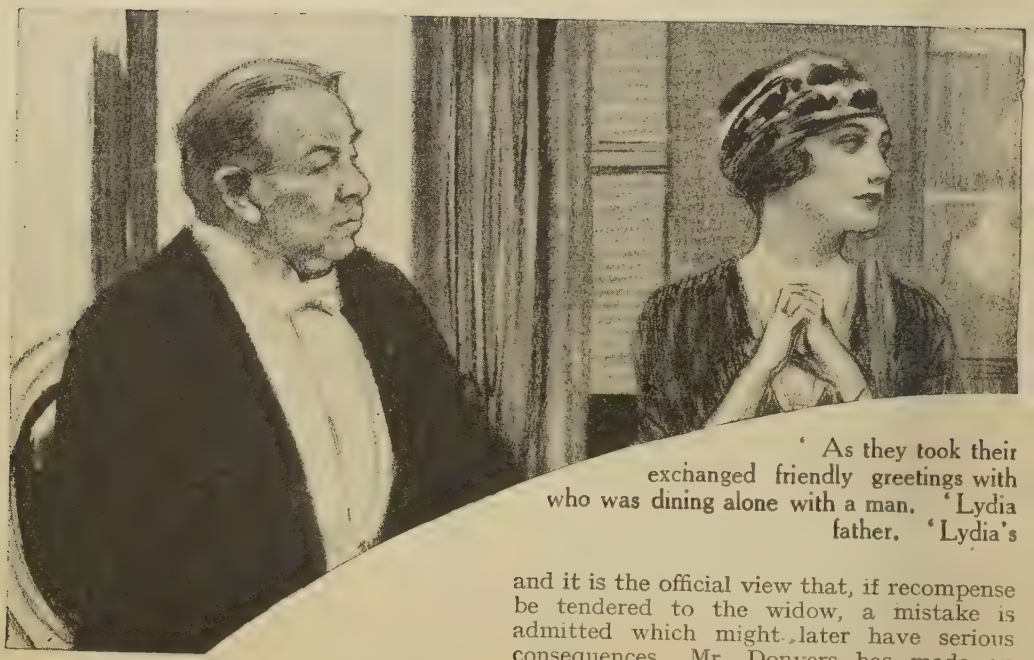
"Say, that's bad," Mr. Cray admitted.

"Owing to information patriotically tendered by Miss Clare," Colonel Haughton continued, "a constant visitor to her flat was arrested soon afterwards and dealt with in the usual way. He admitted having opened the despatches which he found in Donvers's wallet and making use of their contents. The one which he could not open he took away, and, finding it of no interest to his cause, destroyed it. The situation, therefore, amounts to this. Owing to the criminal carelessness of Donvers, a young American, whose innocence was beyond doubt, was shot for a spy."

The woman in mourning looked up. Her eyes flashed fiercely across the room.

"My husband!" she sobbed. "All that I had in the world!"

Donvers looked at Cray as though pleading for his intercession. The latter turned to the young woman.



' As they took their
exchanged friendly greetings with
who was dining alone with a man. ' Lydia
father. ' Lydia's

" Madam," he said, " may I ask your name ? "

" Ellen Saunderson," was the tearful reply. " My husband was Joe Saunderson. He was as innocent as you or I. The letter which never reached Colonel Haughton would have proved it."

Mr. Cray fingered his chin thoughtfully.

' Shot for a spy, eh," he ruminated, " and that letter contained reports which would have saved him ? Say, that's hard ! Has any official notice been taken of this matter ? " he continued, turning to the Colonel.

" Mr. Donvers came to me shortly afterwards," the Colonel proceeded, " and confessed that he had lost one of the despatches and entirely failed to trace it. A few days later, the contents of that despatch reached me officially. I advised Mr. Donvers to tender his resignation, which he did. Communications have passed in secrecy between a certain department of the American Secret Service and our own concerning this unfortunate mistake. It has been decided, for obvious reasons, that it shall not be made a Press matter. The question we now have to discuss is the amount of compensation which shall be offered to Mrs. Saunderson."

The woman turned away wearily.

" Compensation ! " she murmured, bitterly. " That won't give me back Joe."

" I regret to say," Colonel Haughton continued, " that I am not able to procure for Mrs. Saunderson any official recompense. On the evidence presented, the shooting of Joseph Saunderson was amply justified, and it is the official view that, if recompense be tendered to the widow, a mistake is admitted which might later have serious consequences. Mr. Donvers has made an offer which Mrs. Saunderson rejected with scorn. I will be perfectly frank to all of you. My interest in this matter is to see Mrs. Saunderson receive adequate compensation, and further, in the interests of my Department, to see that this matter is forgotten. If Mrs. Saunderson is not satisfied, she will probably drag in the matter which, not for Donvers's sake but for the sake of the Department, it is my wish to conceal. Mr. Donvers has offered—what was the sum, Donvers ? "

" Five thousand pounds," the young man replied. " It is half the spare money I have in the world."

The woman turned round with a sudden burst of passion.

" You and your spare money ! " she exclaimed. " Do you think your spare money, as you call it, will bring back Joe—the husband I lost while you stayed flirting with this hussy here ? "

Miss Clare frowned, and her fingers twitched nervously.

" No shadow of blame can be attached to Miss Clare in this matter," the Colonel intervened, coldly.

" Or to anyone, I suppose ? " the woman scoffed. " Look here," she went on, facing Donvers, " I don't want your money—I'd rather work my fingers to the bone than touch a penny of it—but I want to punish you, and if you're a poor man, so much the better. Ten thousand pounds I want from you by midday to-morrow, and if I don't have it, my story goes to the newspapers for the world to read."

places, Sara
a girl a short distance away,
Donvers,' she whispered to her
rather a dear.'"

THERE was a silence. Donvers turned towards his companion.

"How are you fixed financially?" Cray asked him.

"That five thousand pounds is my limit," Donvers replied, bitterly. "If I have to find the rest, it will break up the business I've just started and beggar me altogether."

"And why shouldn't you be beggared?" the woman demanded, her hands working nervously and her eyes filled with hate. "That's what I want. That's why I say I'll have ten thousand pounds to-morrow if it means your last sixpence."

There was an uneasy silence. Mr. Cray gathered up the threads of the situation.

"It don't seem like there's any more to be said," he declared. "If you'll bring the lady along to my rooms at the Milan Hotel to-morrow at twelve o'clock, Colonel, I'll go into this young man's affairs in the meantime and give him the best advice I can."

The Colonel glanced at his engagement-book.

"I will come," he promised, "but it is the last minute I can promise to give to this unfortunate affair. It must be concluded then, one way or the other."

He touched the bell. His soldier-servant opened the door. Cray and his companion hurried off. The latter groaned as they reached the street.

"Very kind of you to come along, Mr. Cray," he said, "but you can see for yourself how hopeless the whole affair is. Not only have I got to go about all my life with the memory of that poor young man's death on my conscience, but if I find that ten thousand pounds I shall be beggared. There's only one way out that I can think of."

Mr. Cray was leaning back in a corner of the taxi-cab which they had just entered, his chin resting upon his folded arms. The young man watched him furtively. It was not until they neared the Milan, however, that Mr. Cray spoke.

"There may be another way," he ventured. "I promise nothing, but be at my rooms at twelve o'clock to-morrow to meet those people, and in the meantime don't make a fool of yourself. You'd better bring me a statement of just how much you've got, five minutes before that time."

MR. CRAY retired early, thoroughly enjoyed his first night in his luxurious bedchamber, was up betimes, and spent a busy morning. At five minutes to twelve Donvers, looking ghastly ill, presented himself and handed over a folded slip of paper.

"I've put down everything I'm worth there," he said. "If I have to find a penny more than that six thousand pounds, I'm done. I've come to the conclusion," he went on, "that the fairest way will be to divide all I've got between that woman and my wife, and—disappear."

"Sit down," Mr. Cray replied. "I'll make the bargain for you."

There was a ring at the bell a moment or two later, and Mrs. Saunderson was ushered in. A single glance into her face robbed Donvers of any hope he might have had. She was still lachrymose, but her face was set in hard and almost vicious lines. Colonel Haughton arrived a few minutes later. He received Mr. Cray's welcome frigidly.

"I desire," he said, refusing a chair, "as speedy a conclusion to this affair as possible."

"Miss Clare not coming?" Mr. Cray inquired, with unabated geniality.

"There is no necessity for her presence that I am aware of," the Colonel replied. "The only question that remains to be decided is whether Mr. Donvers here is prepared to satisfy Mrs. Saunderson's claims."

Mr. Cray was suddenly a different man. The smile had left his broad, good-natured face. His tone was still brisk, but as cold as the Colonel's.

"Colonel Haughton," he said, "you want a show-down. Here it is. The whole thing is a ramp. Joe Saunderson was never shot, and you know it. Neither was he ever married."

"What the devil——" the Colonel began.

"Chuck it!" Mr. Cray interrupted. "Miss Clare, as you call her, is married to one of the worst crooks in the States, although you, Colonel, seem to have ruined yourself trying to support her for the last few years. This woman was once her understudy, and is a very fair actress still. Joe Saunderson was in charge of the coffee-urn in one of my Y.M.C.A. huts, and I heard the story of his detention and release a dozen times. Now what are you going to do about it, Donvers? It's up to you."

Donvers suddenly reeled and would have fallen but that Cray caught him and laid him upon the couch. He forced some brandy between his teeth. In a minute the young man opened his eyes, the colour came back to his cheeks. He looked around him. Save for their two selves the room was empty.

"Mr. Cray!" he gasped. "Is this true?"

"Bible truth," Mr. Cray declared cheerfully.

"But Colonel Haughton? He's a well-known man—a D.S.O.—head of his Department."

"I guessed he was the goods," Mr. Cray acknowledged. "They do give us the knock sometimes, you know, these men whom no one would suspect."

Donvers was on his feet now, going through all the phases of a rapid recovery to sanity.

"And you actually knew this Joseph Saunderson?" he exclaimed, wonderingly.

"One of my washers-up," Mr. Cray explained with unabated cheerfulness, "who was promoted to the coffee-urn two months ago. I've heard the story of his arrest a dozen times. What about going and looking for your wife, eh? I gave the ladies a hint that there might be something doing in the way of a little luncheon."

Mr. Cray led the way to the lounge, where Sara and Mrs. Donvers were seated.

"You go and take your wife off somewhere, Mr. Donvers," he said, "and don't let us see you again for an hour or so. If you wish it, we'll all dine together."

"At eight o'clock, here," Donvers declared enthusiastically. "I'm host, and I promise you Jules shall do his best. I'll try and say the things I ought to say to you then, Mr. Cray. I'm going to take Lydia right off home now."

Mr. Cray nodded sympathetically, and drew Sara away.

"It's a long story, my dear," he told her, "but things are fixed up all right for young Donvers. He hasn't a worry left in the world. You shall have the whole story over luncheon."

Sara grasped her father's hand.

"Dad," she exclaimed, enthusiastically, "you're a marvel! And to think that we have three months together!"

THAT night Colonel Haughton, D.S.O., shot himself in his study, owing, it was stated, to financial troubles and general depression, and Miss Clare accepted a suddenly proffered engagement for the States. Gerald Donvers's dinner-party, however, was not postponed.

(This series, which grows more and more exciting as it proceeds, will be continued next month with "The Two Philanthropists.")

A Dressing-Room Chat With Mr. Gerald du Maurier

By

GLADYS BEATTIE CROZIER.

"NO! I was never intended for the Stage—I simply drifted there—after some considerable experience of amateur theatricals," said Mr. Gerald du Maurier in his dressing-room at Wyndham's Theatre.

"At Harrow I never acted—but I used to do imitations of Irving—*to boys who had never seen him!*—up and down the top corridor, which were regarded as a great success, except by the Kendals' son, who chanced to be in the same House, who *had* seen him, and used to go off to his room, not thinking much of my imitations!

"On leaving Harrow at eighteen, I went to University College to try to pass the 'Matric'—then I was sent to a solicitor's office—which I believe I nearly wrecked, owing to incapacity!—then joined a firm of ship-brokers—which failed!—before finally launching on a theatrical career—twenty-six years ago—through the kindness of Sir John Hare, who gave me my first part in a play called 'The Old Jew,' in which I played Fritz, a German waiter.

"I met Gilbert Hare at Harrow, and so it came that his father gave me my first start.

"Our association was renewed again during the war-time revival of 'A Pair of Spectacles,' when I was happily able to put my theatre at Sir John Hare's disposal, and it was wonderful to see that gallant old gentleman—he was just on seventy-six years old at the time—going on quite unperturbed by air-raids, and remembering every word of his long part, while bombs were dropping in the close vicinity of the theatre. We had two bad raids on one night, I remember, while he was playing, and this, alas! cut short the run of the revival.

"By the way, I am rather specially proud to have induced my old friend Gilbert Hare to come back to the stage (which he had left, to take up the practice of medicine) after an absence of ten years—the last five of which he spent in the Army, joining the day war began—to create the part of Lord Sandhills, in which he made such a success when we opened last autumn with 'The Choice.'

"I've only owned one 'mascot' in my life, a charm in the shape of a tiny coral hand, given me by Lady Bancroft the first time I went on the stage 'to bring me luck,' and it has carried me through many trying moments!

"When playing with Hare in 'The Old Jew,' and afterwards in 'The Slave of the Ring,' I had to understudy every part in the play, including that of Sir John Hare himself—then Mr. Hare—who fell ill during the last two days of the run and was ordered out of town by his doctor.

"After the notice had gone up we had had no more rehearsals, and I found I didn't know a word of Sir John's part—when he sent for me and told me I must play it!

"I sat up all that night learning it, I remember, and was absolutely word perfect when the time came to go on, but the rest of the company—all very distinguished actors—were so terrified that

Mr. Gerald du Maurier.

I shouldn't get through my part that they promptly forgot theirs !

" Were you a great success ? " I asked.

" That I never discovered, but my old nurse thought I was rather good—the reason being, I fear, that she was about the only person in the house !

Age 18 months.
Photo. Parkinson.

" It was about a year after this," went on Mr. du Maurier, " that Beerbohm Tree put on ' Trilby ' at the Haymarket Theatre, and, out of compliment to my father, offered me the part of Little Billee.

" I knew, however, that I hadn't had experience enough to do justice to such a big part, so I asked to be allowed to play a small ' character part,' Dodor—a French officer of the *Dragons*—instead, for which I modelled myself as closely as I could on my uncle, Eugene du Maurier, from whom I knew my father had drawn the part, and who was in a French cavalry regiment.

" Later on I also played the part of Zouzou in the same play."

Mr. du Maurier is happily possessed of a strong sense of humour which has served to carry him over what would otherwise have been most trying moments when on tour.

" One of my most harrowing experiences in the old days was when touring with Mrs. Patrick Campbell in Maeterlinck's poetical play, ' Pelleas and Melisande,' " said Mr. du Maurier. " We had arrived at Birmingham to find that there was a cattle show on in the town, and the house was packed with country people, who evidently imagined they had come to see a farce !

" I played Pelleas—it's tremendously passionate and poetical, you know—and the more impassioned I became, the more the audience rocked and roared with laughter !

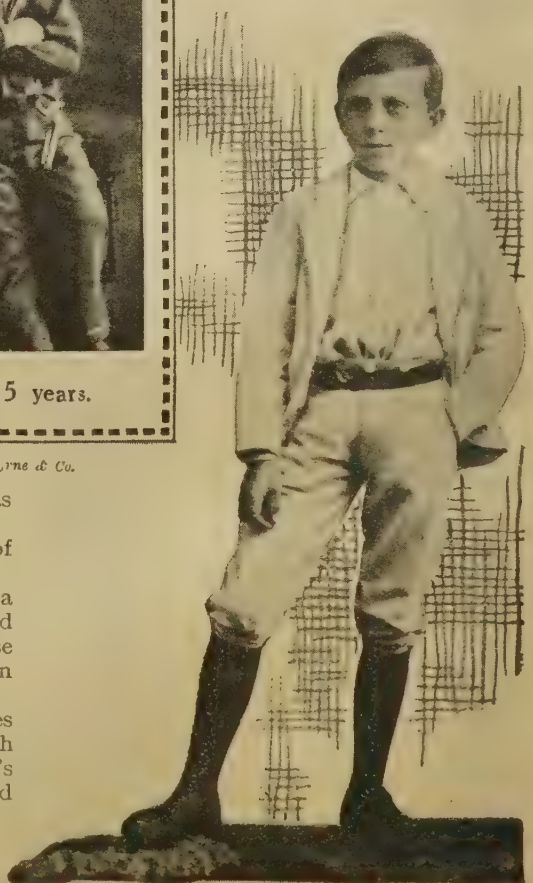
" After it was all over, the manager, a very excitable little man, came scudding up the stairs to the green-room, asking anxiously : ' *Is Mr. du Maurier still there ?* '

" Espying me, he seized me by the hand and shook it for a quarter of an hour, exclaiming excitedly, ' I've never seen a man " get the bird " like you did, and not blow his brains out after the performance ! '

" Once when touring with Sir Herbert Beerbohm Tree in the ' Five Towns,' we put up at a big hotel, where on going up to bed we noticed a long row of unusually diversified foot-gear arranged outside the bedroom doors, each pair marked with the number of the owner's room in white chalk on the soles !

" Struck by an irresistible temptation, Tree, drawing me

Age 5 years.
Photo. Byrne & Co.



Age 10 years.
Photo. J. M. Brown.

swiftly after him, slipped silently up and down the corridor, changing and re-numbering hunting boots, high-heeled shoes, football boots, and nursery strap-slippers.

"Alas! We left too early next morning to hear the result of our practical joke, though rumour reached us that its success even exceeded our expectations—and the recollection for years afterwards gave Tree the keenest pleasure.

"For a long time," went on Mr. du Maurier, "I played with Tree, to whom I was much devoted, so that it was a special satisfaction to me that his daughter Viola should have made such a great success as Lady Clarissa Caerleon in 'The Choice,' which ran for over three hundred nights.

"My first 'stage association' with J. M. Barrie was as an amateur, in the production of an impromptu play he wrote called 'The Greedy Dwarf,' for which I remember I composed the incidental music—all in the key of 'C,' as being the only one I could play! We produced it in his back drawing-room for the benefit of the large party of children with whom he might always be found surrounded.

"I was cast for the title-part, the Dwarf, with my face painted bright green, and standing behind a 'trick table' with my hands disguised as feet, and very startlingly attired, believed myself to have achieved an impenetrable disguise. An illusion, alas! which was at once completely shattered by a nephew, seated in the front row, who shouted out triumphantly, '*There's Uncle Gerald!*' directly the curtain rose.

"Barrie played 'General Utility' and came on in various disguises, in all of which we knew him at once—the best being his coat turned inside out—whenever he got an opportunity!

"No, even his play wasn't a complete success, for most of the front-row children roared when the curtain went up and they caught sight of the Greedy Dwarf, and had to be carried out screaming!"

ON the topic of his professional stage association with Sir James Barrie, Mr. Gerald du Maurier, who, off the stage, is one of his oldest and closest friends, waxed most enthusiastic, for there is a curious quality of sincerity about his art which forms an ideal ballast to Sir James Barrie's magnificent fairy galleons.

Who can forget his whimsical performance of the self-inflicted punishments Barrie delights to set—whether as the Hon. Ernest Woolley, ducking his head in the bucket specially kept for him as a cure for sententious chatter, in "The Admirable Crichton," or as Mr. Darling, crawling in and out of 'Nana's" kennel, in which he had taken up his abode, in "Peter Pan"?

"Barrie is certainly not one of those fatal authors who 'won't alter a line because the play's been typed'! He's far more apt to go to the opposite extreme, and want to alter the entire play at the last dress rehearsal!" remarked his producer, ruefully.

"He likes to make the character exactly suit the actor or actress," went on Mr. du Maurier, "and doesn't mind what pains he takes to encompass this result. That's why you always feel that each member of an original Barrie cast has a part which fits him or her like a glove.

"I remember, for instance, when we were first rehearsing 'The Admirable Crichton,' I had a love-scene to play which I couldn't quite get into. 'You don't seem quite happy in that scene?' queried Sir James Barrie, anxiously. I admitted that I was not, and off he went to write the scene again, to make it suit me—indeed, he eventually rewrote it twice before we were both quite satisfied! Not many authors would do that."

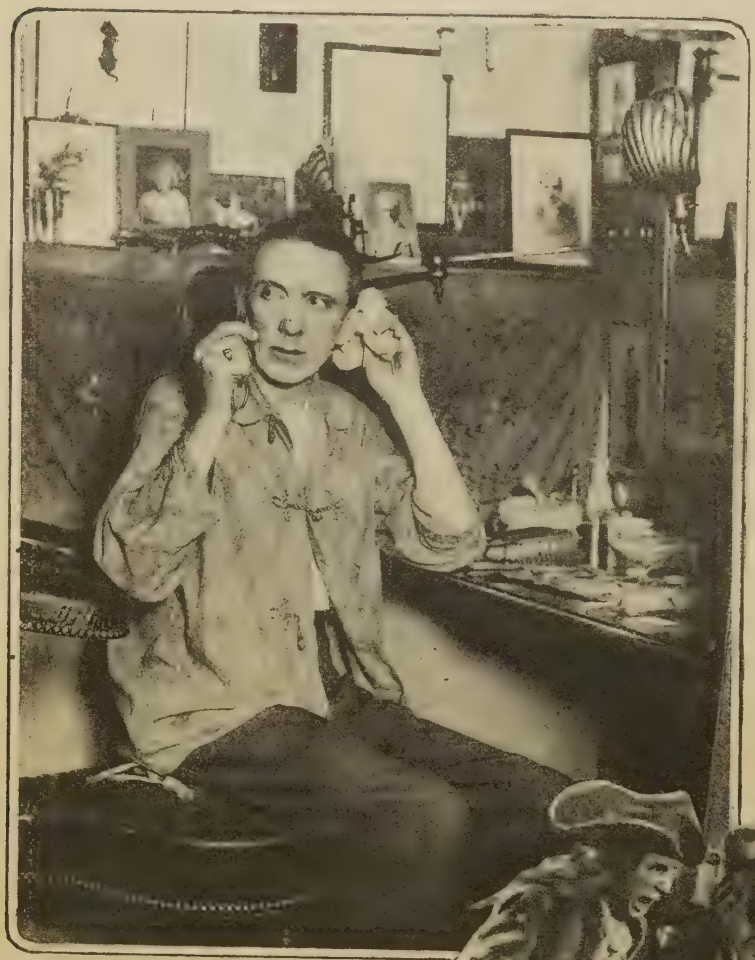
The re-writing of that special love-scene, by the way, had possibly more to answer for than either he or Sir James Barrie dreamed of at the time, for it was at these rehearsals that Mr. Gerald du Maurier first met Miss Muriel Beaumont, who as Lady Agatha was cast for the part of his *fiancée* in the play, and whom he subsequently married in real life!

Apropos of this there is an amusing story of how, when the real engagement of the youthful lovers in the play leaked out amongst their more intimate acquaintances, a big party of their young friends secretly acquired the front row of the stalls, determined to welcome the good news with due enthusiasm! They waited decorously through the play until Gerald du Maurier came to the announcement, "I'm engaged to Lady Agatha!" presenting her—a very bewitching figure in her desert island dress of picturesque rags and tatters, with skins, and feathers of vivid hue—to be greeted by a perfect uproar of applause!

The "front row" stamped their feet, and clapped and cheered to express their congratulations, to the surprise of the rest of the audience, who at first thought them completely mad. Soon light broke in on the house, however, and they joined in the demonstration, and it was several moments before the somewhat abashed young couple could get on with their parts!

"Do you often get interruptions from the 'front'?" I asked.

"Not as a rule," said Mr. du Maurier, "though at the *matinées* of 'Peter Pan,' the Crocodile—who could, of course, always rely



Mr. du Maurier in his dressing-room.
From a photograph.

on acting us all off the stage—made his slow but triumphal progress to a daily accompaniment of clearly-expressed admiration from the children in all parts of the theatre!

"'Oh! You darling Crocodile! I *do* love you, Crocodile!' I remember greeting him on one occasion in particularly piercing tones from an excited three-year-old, who had managed to clamber up on her seat in the front row of the stalls in order to address remarks to him with more effect!

"Once when playing in our revival of 'Diplomacy,' in which, being a translation from the French, the name of the Deity is called upon in all times of stress, a series of interruptions from the 'front' nearly led to my undoing.

"In the first act, playing the part of Henry Beauclerc, I had to exclaim, despairingly, 'My God!' (Mon Dieu!), when an old lady in the stalls promptly protested, exclaiming, 'Don't take that sacred name in vain, please!' in a shrill voice which was clearly heard all over the house.

"Again in the second act, at the height of a most dramatic scene, when I had to interpose 'Good God, Julian!' the old lady's voice again arose: 'Please do not take the name of the Lord in vain!' By this time everyone was agog to see what would happen when we reached the climax, but when the supreme moment came I simply hadn't the pluck to call on the Deity again, and ejaculated 'Great Scot!' instead, an interpolation which brought me the

A reminiscence of "Peter Pan": Mr. du Maurier as
Photo. Ellis & Walery.

biggest laugh I have ever heard in the theatre."

"What is your favourite part?" I asked.

"I think Captain Hook in 'Peter Pan'—he is a glorious fellow!—and after that, perhaps the Policeman in 'A Kiss for Cinderella.' But all Barrie parts are my favourites—I rather liked playing the Father in 'Dear Brutus'—you see I've had considerable practice in the handling of daughters," he added, cheerfully, showing me a charming group of three delightful young girls—Angela, Daphne, and Jeanne—whose portraits in a big silver frame make the chief ornament of the big businesslike-looking writing-table in his outer dressing-room, where visitors are received.

An inner sanctum, which Mrs. du Maurier—who had looked in to carry her husband off home to dinner after the *matinée*—showed me, is hung with the most delightful pictures of three of the sweetest little smiling folk imaginable, taken at every age, from babyhood upwards.

"If only they wouldn't grow up!" said their father, regretfully. "Still, after all, they really stay much the same!" he added, cheering up again.

Mr. Gerald du Maurier's dressing-room is the most cosy and interesting place imaginable, with its pleasantly-shaded lights, comfortable easy-chairs, and quantities of pictures and curios.

A long mirror runs almost the length of one wall, with a wide green-covered couch beneath it, while along the opposite wall stands the big writing-table with a long wide shelf to accommodate, amongst other things, a complete *édition de luxe* of Rudyard Kipling, and a variety of interesting theatrical souvenirs.

On a bracket above the writing-table stands one of Mr. du Maurier's chief treasures, a lovely old French time-piece which dates from the eighteenth century, and was made by Beaumarchais, the author of "Le Mariage de Figaro" and "Le Barbier de Seville," for Beaumarchais *père* was a clockmaker, it seems, and his son started life at the same craft!

Amongst the many delightful sketches and amusing caricatures which adorn the walls is an excellent caricature of Mr. du Maurier by "Spy," a sketch of Sir James Barrie, signed by the famous playwright, and further endorsed "To Gerald," from the brilliant brush of William Nicholson, and one of Max Beerbohm's forceful caricatures depicting Mr. Haddon Chambers!

Above the shelf hang a number of the beautiful original drawings for *Punch* by Mr. du Maurier's father, the late George du Maurier, creator of "Trilby" and "Peter Ibbetson."

The earliest of these carry one back to the

Captain Hook—his favourite part.

Photo. London Stereoscopic Co.

A clever piece of make-up—Mr. du Maurier in "The Notorious Mrs. Ebbsmith."

time when Mr. and Mrs. George du Maurier lived in a delightful old rambling house up at Hampstead, with a big high-walled garden where the du Maurier children, a very merry crew, romped to their hearts' content, making up their own games and pastimes, while their quaint and diverting sayings constantly found their way into the pages of *Punch*.

Mr. and Mrs. du Maurier with their children.
Photo. Underwood & Underwood, Ltd.

One of the earliest portraits of Gerald du Maurier to appear in that periodical shows him as a small white-frocked figure clutching on to the tail-end of a string of older children, his three sisters and his brother, with the following "Legend" attached, under the title of "Delicate Consideration":—

AN EPICURE.

MAMMA: "Oh! George (otherwise Gerald), I'm ashamed of you, rubbing your lips like that, and after the dear little French girl has just given you a kiss!"

GEORGE: "I'm not rubbing it out, Mummy, I'm rubbing it in!"

Reproduced by permission of the Proprietors of "Punch."

MAMMA: "What a din you are making, chicks! What are you playing at?"

TRIXY: "Oh! Mamma, we're playing at Railway Trains—I'm the Engine, Guy's the first-class carriage, Sylvia's a second-class carriage, May's a third-class carriage, and Gerald, he's a third-class carriage, too—that is, he's really a *Truck*, but you mustn't tell him, as it would hurt his feelings!"

Another famous *Punch* drawing, entitled "An Epicure," depicts him a year or two later, accompanied by his parents, in a little white duck sailor suit, eyeing a tiny French child, to whom he has evidently just been introduced, and rubbing his mouth with the back of his hand. This drawing, with its amusing legend, is here reproduced.

Perception

by

ARTHUR CRABB

ILLUSTRATED BY W.R.S.STOTT

FRANK MERRITT left the brokers' office where he worked, and went home. He opened the door and went upstairs without speaking to his mother, who was in the kitchen. He closed the door of his room, sat down in a chair, spread his arms on a none too firm table, put his head on them, and was just plain unhappy. Everything was wrong, so wrong that life wasn't worth living—the world was no fit place to live in, and Frank didn't want to live. After a while he got up and started to spruce up a bit, decided not to, and then decided that he would, though he couldn't have explained why it was worth while, considering how rotten a place the world was.

He went down to supper when his mother called him, and sat through the meal without uttering two words together. It was nothing new; it had been going on for a month, only it was getting worse; even his sister had given up trying to tease him and was getting worried.

After supper he went out into the street, and hesitated as though he didn't know which way to turn. Finally he decided to go west, and walked past house after house, each exactly like the one it was fastened to.

FRANK was twenty-three, and Sarah Neely lived a few houses down the street; Frank loved Sarah, and Sarah didn't love Frank. You could hardly blame Sarah, especially if her love was to have anything practical in it, for Frank was getting twenty dollars a week and not only had to support himself but, with his sister, he had to support his mother. Perhaps Sarah couldn't see that loving Frank would get her anywhere. But that may not have been the reason—perhaps Sarah, who worked in a store, was looking for pure romance, and Frank certainly was no romantic youth. No one would ever pick him out of a crowd to be a heroic lover or, for that matter, any other sort of hero. He was tall and thin, not handsome; his taste in clothes was not elegant, his manners were not polished, and he was not brilliant. But he had his good points: he worked steadily, he wasn't fast, and he loved Sarah, thereby showing good sense, for she was quite worth loving.

But Sarah preferred Benny Scullin, who earned thirty dollars a week, had no one dependent on him, and was a man of the world, and Sarah was keeping steady company with him if she wasn't actually engaged to him, all of which Frank knew only too well, and that was why, at the end of the half-hour, he turned away from Sarah's house and not toward it.

He jumped on a car, treated himself to a gallery seat at the Arena, saw the fights, went to the Palace Hotel, had a glass of beer with some friends, and went home. The next morning the dull life with no future began all over again, worse than ever, for he saw Sarah Neely in the car, and what she said to him didn't help a bit.

Some time after one o'clock that day Frank was eating his lunch, when a plain-clothes man came up behind him, spoke to him, and with no commotion whatever told him that he was under arrest, and led him away. Within an hour several men had identified him as the man who had stolen three thousand dollars in Liberty Bonds from the cashier's cage in the office of W. R. Fiske and Co., bankers and brokers. Frank refused to admit it, and he refused to discuss the matter in any way whatever, which was undoubtedly in keeping with his frame of mind. He didn't care what happened to him—anything would be better than life as it had been with Sarah loving Ben Scullin.

The next morning Mrs. Green walked into Samuel Lyle's office. Mrs. Green was a widow, the aunt of Frank Merritt, and had been for many years a servant in the house of Mr. Lyle's mother. Mr. Lyle could have received her with no greater courtesy if she had been the foremost lady of the land. He listened to her story of the misfortunes of her nephew and her proffer of all her savings-bank money if Mr. Lyle would only get Frank out of his trouble.

"There, there, Mary, don't cry," he said. "There has probably been some mistake, and I'll try to straighten it out. Money doesn't count between old friends. I'll see what can be done right away." But his words brought little comfort to Mary Green; Frank had been arrested, and there were too many who had seen him do it. Her one hope was that Mr. Lyle, the great criminal lawyer, could somehow or other get him off—she didn't expect him to prove Frank hadn't done it.

WHEN Mary Green had left, Mr. Lyle sent for Thomas Nash, a young man in his office. Thomas was the third of the seven younger brothers of Mrs. Hugh Ladd. To him Mr. Lyle explained as much as he knew of Frank Merritt's predicament, and told him to get all the details.

"Hugh and Norman Dean were the two men who saw him run when the alarm was given," Tommy said.

"That sounds bad for Merritt," Mr. Lyle said; "but let's see what we can do for him."

Accordingly Thomas Nash investigated the case against Frank Merritt, which was this :—

On the day of the theft Norman Dean and Hugh Ladd had talked for nearly an hour with Mr. Fiske in his office. Their talk finished, they said good-bye, and, with their minds still on their business, left Mr. Fiske's room and stepped into the private corridor. A man was approaching them. They let him pass, and were following him towards the street door when they heard shouts, which came from the rear of the banking rooms. Norman's mind, unusually quick to assimilate impressions, connected the man who had just passed them with the cries, and dashed in pursuit of him.

The office itself was nearly empty, the corridor entirely so, and there was no one to stop the man. He would, however, to escape Norman, have to open a heavy door and close it behind him. He found the door difficult to manage, and Norman was upon him. The man turned, stepped quickly to one side, and put out his foot. Norman tripped and fell, striking ineffectively at the man's head. Before Norman could scramble to his feet the man had gone through the door and disappeared in the noonday crowds on Main Street. He had left his hat behind him as the result of Norman's wild swing at his head, but afterwards no one could be found who remembered seeing him or any hatless man in the street.

The evidence against Merritt started in the stock-room of Fiske and Co., of which Walter Jones had charge, he being the only *employé* in it at the time of the robbery. He stated that Merritt had left the room just before the cashier's shouts were heard. Merritt had gone through the swinging doors, and so far as Mr. Jones knew might have turned to the right into the public corridor of the office building, or left into the private corridor of Fiske and Co. Mr. Jones stated that Merritt had been wearing a blue serge suit, a red tie, and a dark-green felt hat, such as the one the thief had left behind.

Arthur James, the cashier, admitted that he had carelessly left the grille of his cage open and the package of bonds on the flat desk within reach from the corridor. He had heard a step, looked round, and had seen a man just disappearing. He noted the open grille, went to close it, saw that the bonds were gone, and yelled. He could not identify the man he had seen, as he had caught only a fleeting glimpse of his back.

When Merritt had been arrested he was wearing a blue suit, red tie, and dark-brown felt hat. Within another hour Hugh Ladd and Norman Dean had seen and identified him as the man who had passed them in the corridor and who had run when James had shouted. The hat left behind had been positively identified as Merritt's by one Ferdie Schwartz. It was quite new, and a man in the shop in which it had probably been bought had looked at Frank Merritt, shaken his head, and said he thought he had sold him a hat like that, but he wasn't sure.

That, in outline, was the evidence on which the State expected a verdict against Frank Merritt.

TOM NASH tried arguing with Merritt, with no success. He simply stuck to his guns, saying that he knew nothing whatever about the business. Nash tried to work out an alibi and failed, for no alibi was possible, whether Frank was guilty or not, for the whole affair had not taken over a minute.

When Thomas failed, Samuel Lyle tried his hand on Frank with no better results. He said that if Frank would confess and return the bonds, his youth, previous good character, and the fact that Mr. Lyle had great influence with Mr. Fiske and the district attorney would, taken together, undoubtedly make possible at least a suspended sentence, and he might even go scot-free and be given another chance.

But Frank was obdurate; he said he hadn't taken the bonds. Mr. Lyle therefore told Mrs. Green that he would defend her nephew at his trial, but that he could offer her mighty little hope of his acquittal.

MR. LYLE was at a loss for an explanation of Frank's attitude, and told Tommy Nash so.

"There's something wrong somewhere, Tom, and I admit I don't know what it is. The man seems to be a commonplace fellow with no great strength or weakness, no particular imagination. No exception can be taken to his previous conduct. I am convinced that if he took the bonds he did it on the spur of the moment—the theft was not planned; no thought of stealing had ever entered his head.

"What I can't understand is his apparent indifference to what happens to him. Men like Merritt, if they are guilty, almost always confess.

"And what can he have done with the bonds if he did steal them? A thorough search has not discovered them, and the immediate deduction is that he gave them to an accomplice—he certainly could not have given them to an innocent person, for an innocent person would come forward and give them up.

"An accomplice, too, would be likely to give them up, for one receiving stolen property, knowing it to be stolen, is guilty of a crime, and such a holder would be afraid that Frank Merritt might confess at any minute. His refusal to confess cannot be based on his inability to return the bonds, for he could, under threat of exposure, compel his accomplice to return the bonds to him. The existence of an accomplice is, I think, very unlikely. If Frank stole the bonds simply because they were there to steal and not as the result of a well-laid plan, how could he so quickly find someone to deliver the bonds to? Such a person must be a friend, and a friend would know that Frank could not have owned the bonds himself, and would have asked questions unless he was himself a crook. In that case would he stand his chance of prison for the sake of protecting a crook when in all probability the crook would never return the bonds to Merritt, but would keep them for his own benefit?

"No, Tom, there's something wrong somewhere. Frank Merritt hasn't had much chance to succeed. He didn't get much of a start from his parents; his education didn't amount to much. He has always been poor, and he lives in a world where money is god and the only god. To be poor in his world is a sin—the possession of money is the only success; there are no refining influences

"He had caught only a fleeting glimpse of his back."

whatever. What effect that sort of life has produced in Merritt you and I can't know, but I make the guess that there's something you and I don't know about this business. However, there's nothing that we can do but let the case go to trial—perhaps something will turn up."

But nothing did turn up.

The evening of the day before the trial Tommy Nash dined with the Ladds, and, of course, he entirely ignored the professional side of life, though the fact that the next day his much-respected brother-in-law was to be a witness for the other side did add a bit of spice to the occasion. Tommy, however, made several mental notes of things which seemingly could have nothing whatever to do with Frank Merritt.

Mr. Lyle dined with Norman Dean and threatened him with a grilling when he was in the witness-box next day, such a grilling as would try his soul, at which threat Norman laughed. Mr. Lyle also made certain notes which, it seemed, could hardly have concerned Frank Merritt.

At eight o'clock that same evening a boy rang the door-bell of the house of Mr. Walter Jones, Fiske and Co.'s stock-room man, asked to see Mrs. Jones, and walked into the house for that purpose. He delivered a box of flowers to Mrs. Jones, took her receipt, and departed, but not until he had made one mental note. Mrs. Jones did not know who had sent her the flowers, nor did she or Mr. Jones suspect the taking of that one note, but Mr. Lyle knew all about them both.

THE trial commenced. The prosecution outlined its case and called Arthur James, the cashier, who swore to, and described, the theft of the bonds. Mr. Lyle did not cross-examine him. Then came Mr. Jones, who swore to Merritt's presence in the stock-room and departure from it just before the theft had been committed. Mr. Jones was sure that Merritt had worn a blue suit and a red tie, but would not swear as to his hat.

Mr. Jones was then turned over to the defence for cross-examination. Mr. Lyle elicited from him that he knew Merritt, his name, and his business, and that Merritt dropped into the stock-room practically every day, sometimes two or three times during one day, and that Mr. Jones had no objection to his so doing, as his deportment was always perfectly proper. On that particular day he had stood up in the back of the room, perhaps for ten minutes, and then gone out by the swinging doors. Mr. Lyle then annoyed Mr. Jones by making him admit that he really didn't know how long before the theft Merritt had left the stock-room. Mr. Lyle finally made him say that it *might* have been as much as fifteen or twenty minutes, though he didn't think so.

Having gone this far, Mr. Lyle hesitated for a moment. Then he turned back to Mr. Jones. "You dine at home usually, Mr. Jones?" he asked.

"Yes."

"And you did so last night?"

"Yes."

"And spent the evening at home with Mrs. Jones?"

"Yes."

"Then will you please tell the jury the colour of the dress Mrs. Jones wore last evening and something of its design?"

Mr. Lyle waited. Mr. Jones laughed, tried to think clearly, and immediately looked foolish. Mr. Lyle went back to his task "Of course I must ask you not to speak hastily and to be absolutely sure of your statement before you make it; I can hardly contradict you."

Mr. Jones stammered, and finally said, "I think——" but Mr. Lyle interrupted him.

"Not what you think, Mr. Jones—what you know, please."

"I don't know; I don't remember."

"And yet you have been willing to swear that your description of what Frank Merritt had on that day is based on what you saw before the crime was committed and not on your observations when you saw him after his arrest and heard what others had to say. That's all." Mr. Lyle dismissed the witness and sat down.

There was a titter in the court-room.

Hugh Ladd entered the witness-box and identified Merritt as the man who had passed him in the corridor and then run, but the identification had one small flaw in it—Mr. Ladd could not swear that the two men were one and the same beyond any possible shadow of a doubt. They were similar in size; they had the same type of face; the man in the corridor wore a blue suit and a dark-coloured felt hat. He believed Merritt to be the man.

Mr. Lyle made short work of Hugh Ladd. He would not swear absolutely to the fact, and so long as he wouldn't do that his testimony didn't amount to much. Mr. Lyle was about to sit down when he turned back to Mr. Ladd.

"Do *you* know the colour of the gown Mrs. Ladd wore last night?"

Hugh did not hesitate. "I do not," he said, and laughed, and everyone else laughed. Every married man in the court-room was trying to remember what his wife had worn the previous evening.

FERDINAND SCHWARTZ entered the witness-box. Ferdie knew Frank Merritt well, had known him for several years, and had met him by chance the night before in the bar of the Palace Hotel, which

was next to the Arena, where they had all been to the fights. Ferdie and Merritt and everyone else drank beer. Somebody spoke of Frank's new hat and said it was a good hat for a dollar, which raised a laugh. A little later Ferdie happened to be near Merritt, and when Merritt tipped his chair back Ferdie reached over, took off his hat, and looked at it. Merritt made no objection, and answered Ferdie's banter about the green lid with good humour. Ferdie remembered the hat perfectly—could easily have picked it out from among a thousand like it.

When he heard about the robbery and the hat, and that Frank Merritt was suspected, he had had a look at the hat. It was exactly the same sort of hat that Frank had been wearing the night before, but he wouldn't have said it was the same hat just for that; what made him positive was that there was a spot on it. The spot was still plainly to be seen on the hat.

Ferdie was turned over to the defence for cross-examination.

"You are a friend of Frank Merritt's?" Mr. Lyle asked.

"I know him."

"Do you like him or dislike him?"

"I like him all right," Ferdie said.

"Then why were you so anxious to testify against him?"

"I thought I ought to," the witness admitted, reluctantly.

"Were you discharged by Amos Swift and Co. a year ago?"

"Yes."

"Because you stole postage-stamps and faked your expense account?"

"Yes."

Mr. Lyle wanted to show that Ferdie was antagonistic to Merritt, and that his character was not beyond reproach, but his main object was to get Ferdie mad. He accomplished that.

"You were drinking the night you say you saw Merritt's hat in the Palace bar?" Mr. Lyle asked.

"Yes."

"What did you drink?"

"Beer."

"Now recollect carefully. Had you been drinking before you met Merritt?"

"I had not!" Ferdie was on safe ground now and was emphatic.

"Are you absolutely sure?"

"Certainly, I'm sure. I went straight there from the A——"

"Never mind that, please. Simply answer my questions. Did you have more than one drink?"

"Yes."

"How many?"

"Three."

"Are you sure you didn't have more than three? Tell the truth."

"Ain't I tellin' the truth? I had three and no more."

"But you were drunk, weren't you?"

"Drunk on three beers! I was not."

The court-room laughed at Mr. Lyle, and Ferdie beamed.

"Were you absolutely sober?"

"I was." Ferdie was enjoying Mr. Lyle's discomfiture.

"Sober enough to know it was a green hat?"

"It was a green hat."

"You're jealous of Merritt, aren't you?"

"No, I'm not." Ferdie grinned; he knew what Lyle was driving at. The court-room laughed again. Ferdie was getting the best of the great Lyle, and Mr. Lyle hardly knew which way to turn. In desperation he went back to the hat.

"You examined Merritt's hat very carefully that night and remember it so well that you can swear this to be the same one?" Mr. Lyle picked up the hat and held it out towards Ferdie.

"It is."

"It was green?"

"It was."

"And new?"

"It was."

Mr. Lyle examined the hat again.

"And you saw a spot exactly like this one on it?"

"I did."

"And the same sort of ribbon and bow on the outside?"

"I did."

"And the brown leather sweatband?"

"I did."

"And the——" Mr. Lyle adjusted his eyeglasses and turned a little so as to get a better light on the hat. "And the maker's trade-mark stamped on the sweatband in gold?"

"I did!" Ferdie was more emphatic than ever.

"And all you've sworn to here is absolutely true?"

"It is!"

"That's all!" Mr. Lyle snapped the words at the vicinity of the witness-box. Then he turned to the jury. "Gentlemen, if you will examine this hat, you will see that it bears no name or trade-mark whatever, on the sweatband or otherwise."

Mr. Lyle sat down, thankful that the prosecution hadn't been quick enough to foil him. He knew that the jury would look on Ferdinand Schwartz's testimony with grave suspicion.

AND then came Norman Dean, president of the great Lee Bridge Company, a man of wonderful intellect and pretty nearly Alden's foremost citizen.

Mr. Lyle listened as he gave his testimony,

clearly and positively, with no reservations whatever as to the main point—namely, that Frank Merritt was the man who had run away from Fiske and Co.'s office. He swore unqualifiedly to the man and his suit and tie, and Mr. Lyle was afraid that the facts were exactly as Norman Dean stated them. But what he thought about it had nothing to do with it—what the jury thought was what counted.

He took Norman Dean back over the ground already covered, simply to emphasize that when Dean left Mr. Fiske's office his mind was on the business he had been discussing, that he had been naturally much excited while pursuing the thief, and that the whole episode had taken not over fifteen seconds.

That accomplished, Mr. Lyle smiled at Mr. Dean.

"Will you tell the jury what was the colour of the dress Mrs. Dean wore last night?"

"Black."

"Exactly—an evening gown, simple in design, but having a small amount of, say, metallic scales on it. You remember them, of course—in fact, you may have noticed them particularly?"

"Yes, I did, at the suggestion of a friend." Mr. Lyle himself had spoken of them the night before.

"Quite so. Mr. Dean, there is a fireplace in your library with a mantelpiece over it. There is a clock on it. Will you tell me the colour of the clock?"

"Black."

"And the face?"

"Black, with bronze letters and a bronze rim."

"Exactly. And the hands?"

"Bronze."

"Very good. Now we come to the point. Will you describe the shape of the clock, roughly, and tell me whether it is plain black or whether there is any ornament on it, and what type of numerals denotes the hours?"

"It's clock-shaped, and there is a little gold ornament, a little tracery, on it. The numerals are Roman, I's, V's, and X's."

"Clock-shaped is excellent." Mr. Lyle smiled broadly. "You can do no better than that?"

Norman shook his head. "That's the best I can do," he said.

"Will you take my word for it that the clock, except for its face, is as plain as your hat, or must I produce the clock?"

"No. I think perhaps you are right."

"If you wish, I will also prove that there are no numerals whatever on that clock-face, but instead that there are simply straight lines, heavier than the minute marks. Shall I do so or will you admit that you know little or nothing of the appearance of the clock you have looked at every day for these many years?"

"I admit that you are probably quite right."

"Your powers of perception are not at all good, are they? Suppose we forget the clock and go to something else. You carry a watch and chain, I believe, watch in one pocket, knife in another, chain between, connecting them?"

"Yes."

"You know, of course, the manner in which the hours of four and six are shown on your watch-face—everyone knows that—but tell me about your chain. How long is it?"

"About twelve inches."

"With closely woven links—how many links would you say there are in it?"

"Fifty or sixty."

"Won't you count them?"

Norman counted them. "One hundred and four," he said, "and it's about seventeen inches long."

"How long have you worn that chain?"

"Twenty years."

"And you've seen it a dozen times a day for those twenty years and yet underestimate its length forty per cent. Good. Now let me ask you another question. You eat cereal for breakfast every morning, I think?"

"Yes."

"And you have a small jug for cream; you have had the same jug for some years?"

"Yes."

"What colour is it?"

"Red and white."

"True. Will you describe the handle, the shape of the jug, and the nature of its decoration?"

Norman described the jug as being white with two red bands round it and with a red handle. The jug came straight down from the top for about an inch, bulged almost at right angles, and then tapered inward and downward; the handle was very small and square, running outward from the top at right angles and then straight down to the bulge; the spout was sharp and projected about a half-inch.

"Anything else?" Mr. Lyle asked, and when Norman said he could think of nothing more, Mr. Lyle reached into a bag, took from it a red and white jug and handed it to Mr. Dean. "Is that the jug you have just described?"

Norman examined it and handed it back. "Yes, that's the one I tried to describe," he said.

The assistant district attorney made an objection—he had been making objections

"Mr. Lyle quickly stood erect. A newspaper hid his necktie from view. 'Will you please tell me what colour necktie I am wearing?' he said to the witness."

all along. But the judge overruled him, and Mr. Lyle asked the stenographer to read Norman's description of the jug. He held it before the jury as the stenographer read. The jug was shaped like a barrel, not like a jug; the handle was white, not red, and it curved from the top to the bottom of the jug instead of being small and square; the spout was so small it could hardly be called a spout at all, and there were six red bands about the jug itself, not two.

"And you have seen and handled that jug practically every morning for several years?"

"Yes," Norman admitted.

"And you dare tell this court that you remember the colour of the real thief's clothes and tie and that you remember his face, when you saw him only once and for only a few seconds when you were under great mental strain? Bah!"

MR. LYLE did not wait for an answer. He turned as though to speak to Thomas Nash, beside him, and found him gone. He turned back to Norman Dean.

"I see that my associate, Mr. Nash, has left the room. You know Mr. Nash intimately, I think?"

"Yes."

"You have seen him here beside me for some hours?"

"Yes."

"What was the colour of his suit?"

"I don't know."

"You mean that you have been looking at him for two or three hours and don't know the colour of his suit?"

Norman laughed with perfect good nature. "No," he said, "I don't remember, except that it was dark."

"Dark, you say! We all wear dark suits; can't you do better than that? What colour necktie was he wearing?"

"I don't know."

"Was it a bow tie or a four-in-hand? Please know something."

"Four-in-hand, I think."

Mr. Lyle waved his hand over his head and waited. Thomas Nash came down the aisle, wearing a light grey suit and bow tie. The judge, the jury, and spectators laughed. Norman enjoyed the joke immensely. Mr. Lyle did not even smile. He handed a book to Norman.

"You are in the steel business, I think?"

"Yes."

"You are an engineer?"

"After a fashion," Norman admitted.

"That is common knowledge—please read the first line on page forty-four."

"'The prisoner, Simon Samuels, stated that at one o'clock,'" Norman read.

"There are two large S's in that line; choose one, examine it closely." Norman did so. "Now you have discovered that a printed S is composed of two loops, the upper and the lower. Which is the larger?" Norman went back to the printed S.

"They are about the same—the upper is possibly very slightly smaller."

"Correct, but only microscopically smaller. In other words, it requires close examination to discover the difference in size?"

"The difference is extremely slight."

"Thank you. Your estimate is most interesting." Mr. Lyle took the book to the jury and showed them the S's upside down. The jury laughed. Mr. Lyle took the book back to Norman and let him try the experiment. "I recommend a visit to the oculist, sir," he said.

He walked back to his place. "Another question," he said. "You read the *Alden News* every day, have done so for years, I'm sure?"

"Yes."

"Then make me a sketch, quickly, of the 'E' in Alden, as it appears in the paper's name at the top of the first page in black letters an inch or more high."

Again Norman laughed. "I don't know whether it is block, script, or fancy," he said.

"Then let me show you." Mr. Lyle turned his back on Norman, reached for a copy of the morning paper, faced him again, and held up the paper where the letter "E" might be seen.

"Mr. Dean," he said, in solemn tones, "the defendant's future depends to a very large extent upon your identification of him as the man you pursued in Fiske and Co.'s corridor and your absolute certainty as to the clothes and tie that man was wearing. The other witnesses are uncertain, one is not trustworthy. Your character is beyond reproach; you have told the truth to the best of your ability. The question is not of your veracity, but whether or not you are mistaken. There are many reasons why you might be mistaken; we may discuss them later; now I will ask you one question, and when you have answered it I want you to tell the jury whether you are absolutely sure the defendant is the man you saw in Fiske and Co.'s office." Mr. Lyle leaned forward to the table before him and then quickly stood erect. A newspaper hid his necktie from view.

"Will you please tell me what colour necktie I am wearing?" he said.

Norman Dean didn't know, and for the first time showed signs of embarrassment.

"At least, say whether it is of a bright colour," Mr. Lyle begged.

Norman Dean shook his head. "I think it is a dark tie," he said.

Mr. Lyle drew the newspaper down slowly—his tie was light grey.

"That's all," Mr. Lyle drawled, and shrugged his shoulders.

The prosecution rested, the defence offered no evidence, the district attorney and Mr. Lyle addressed the jury, each belittling the other's efforts, the judge charged, and the jury retired.

MR. LYLE went back to his office. For a few minutes he sat deep in thought, puffing the cigar that he had lighted when he left the court; then he rose and took two or three books from the cases along the walls. They were not law books, but scientific works on the eye, optical illusions, colour-blindness, and powers of perception.

It was an old, old story to Samuel Lyle—for thirty years a constant stream of criminals had flowed past him; days in court were to him as days in the country are to farmers; the only thrill left in his professional life was the thrill of a dramatic situation planned by him and clearing up the mystery surrounding an event or an accusation. For hours he would plod along, apparently dull and methodical, but the opposing lawyers never knew when the lightning would strike, when he would suddenly send his voice vibrating to the farthest corner of the court-room, and put an entirely different complexion on the case being tried. No one could ever tell what Sam Lyle was going to do.

But for all his experience, for all the contempt that familiarity breeds, Mr. Lyle had never become hardened to the pathos of the young and first offender.

The approach to vice is gradual, almost always; step by step the man nears the border line, and until he has actually crossed it and taken up his abode on the other side there is always the chance of saving him.

Mr. Lyle had been reading for half an hour when Tommy Nash came in, smiling. "Not guilty," he said.

"H-m," muttered Mr. Lyle, "apparently the jury had a sense of humour."

Tommy laughed. "Merritt's outside," he said. "I told him you wanted to see him."

Mr. Lyle shrugged his shoulders. "Will he talk now?" he asked.

"I don't know. Maybe you can make him. He hasn't said anything to me; he doesn't seem particularly elated."

"Bring him in," Mr. Lyle said, and in a moment Frank was in the room.

"I'm very much obliged—for what—what you've done for me," he stammered.

"Do you really mean that, son?" Mr. Lyle said.

"Why, yes, of course I mean it."

"Do you mean it enough to prove it to me?"

Frank did not answer; his eyes wandered nervously about the room, and finally rested on Mr. Lyle's as though held there against his will. Slowly a smile crept across the great lawyer's lips, and his face became very kindly.

"My boy," he said, "you have a long way to go before you finish this life. The way may be smooth and pleasant; it may be rough and cruel. It depends largely on yourself—and you may take an old man's word for it, a man who has seen more than his share of this world's troubles, that the truth will always make the way happier and easier, and concealing it will always, in the long run, make it very much harder.

"You have been declared not guilty of the charge against you. The jury ignored the evidence; the jury was tricked, but now you can never be punished for that crime. But that is not the end; if you stole the bonds, you will be unhappy until you have confessed and made such restitution as is in your power; you cannot forget it, you can never be at peace with yourself until you have cleansed yourself of that black stain.

"Perhaps you did not take the bonds. All the evidence goes to show that you did, but for some reason which I do not know myself, I believe you did not take them. I have acquitted you in my own mind, just as the jury did, but for a different reason—but I do believe that you know something about those bonds; I do believe that you were the man who ran when the cashier shouted; I do believe that you know the thief, and I believe that you are shielding him for some reason known only to yourself, and which is a crime in itself."

Frank Merritt had sunk into a chair as Mr. Lyle was speaking; his eyes were fixed on the older man's, his hands trembled, his face was flushed. Mr. Lyle made his final appeal.

"And so, my boy, if you will take my advice, you will tell the truth, all of it, all you know, and some day you will thank me for advising you to do it."

"I did not take the bonds," the boy muttered.

"No, but you were the man who ran away and left his hat behind." Mr. Lyle's voice was soft and low, but very positive.

"Yes, I was."

Mr. Lyle's expression did not change. "And why did you run if you had not stolen the bonds?"

"Because I knew who did it." The strain had become too great—Frank had to talk. "I saw him come in from the office corridor and go to the cashier's cage, and I saw him take something and go out again. I could see him through the door of the stock-room. I didn't think much about it then, but when I started to go out I saw the wicket of the

"'Frank has confessed,' said Mr. Lyle to the girl, 'that he shielded the thief to save you from disgrace—he risked prison because he loved you.'"

cage was open, and I knew he'd stolen something, and——"

"You kept on going," interrupted Mr. Lyle, "because you didn't want anyone to know what you'd seen, and when you heard the cashier shout you were afraid that you'd be made to tell if they caught you. You were crazy mad, you didn't stop to think, you just bolted, to save your friend."

"Yes, that's it, except that he isn't any friend of mine."

"Not a friend of yours! Then why on earth did you want to protect him?"

"Because——" Frank stopped.

"Tell me, my boy, tell me," Mr. Lyle cried.

"Because—because he was a friend of a friend of mine, and I won't say any more than that."

Mr. Lyle's finger had been playing with a button hidden under his desk, and as a result just at that moment a young woman came in and gave Mr. Lyle a slip of paper, on which was written that Sarah Neely wished to see Mr. Lyle. No names of callers were ever announced aloud in Mr. Lyle's offices when other people were there. Mr. Lyle knew a good deal about Sarah Neely, for Tommy Nash had unearthed her when he was digging out facts regarding Frank Merritt's life and associates, and he knew that Frank had been very attentive to her. The shopgirl had been the only feminine element that Tommy Nash could discover.

"Ask Miss Sarah Neely to come in," Mr. Lyle said quietly, and watched Frank Merritt as he spoke. He saw the boy start and flush, and his suspicion was confirmed. He sank back in his chair, his eyes half closed, his hands hanging limp.

MISS SARAH NEELY came into the room slowly and stood by the door, nervous and embarrassed. Mr. Lyle's half-closed, dreamy eyes were on Frank Merritt, and they saw what he had expected to see. He waited for a full minute, and then turned slowly to Sarah Neely.

"Well," he said, almost harshly, "tell me what you know?" The poor girl was too frightened to speak, and again Mr. Lyle waited.

Finally, Sarah, in a voice so low and husky that they could hardly hear her, said: "I would rather talk with—with you by yourself."

"Very well, in a moment. You know something that would have helped Frank. You are too late, he has confessed—he has confessed that he shielded the thief to save you from disgrace. He was a fool to do it, you don't care a snap of your finger for him—but he risked prison because he loved you. It is easy to see that a man you love stole the bonds, and that Frank was fool enough to protect him for your sake. Bah, how ridiculous you both are!"

Mr. Lyle's voice vibrated through the room as he shot the words at the man and the girl, but he himself was thinking very little of what he said—he was simply calling them names, and any names would do. He was watching them, and saw what he wanted to see; he saw the girl shrink from him and move slowly to Frank Merritt, and then suddenly, when he cried that Frank had confessed, he saw her bury her head on his shoulder and Frank take her in his arms as though to protect her from Mr. Lyle's abuse.

Mr. Lyle stopped and sank back in his chair, smiling, and again he waited. Finally, he rose and went to them.

"It's all right," he said, gently. "I'm not going to ask you to tell me anything more. It looks as though everything had turned out all right for both of you. Run along, and don't do anything foolish again."

Sarah wasn't frightened any longer, and Frank Merritt wasn't mad or obstinate; they were both experiencing quite other emotions. They went out, Frank looking straight ahead of him and with his face crimson, but Sarah Neely, before she closed the door, turned and smiled at Mr. Lyle.

TOMMY NASH was alone with Mr. Lyle.

"What perfect silly nonsense!" Tommy exclaimed. "Imagine his standing trial when all he had to do was to stop when the cashier shouted, let himself be searched, and deny any knowledge of what had happened."

"It's easy to imagine what you would do," Mr. Lyle said, "but not easy to imagine what a man like Merritt would do, especially when he is dead sure that the girl he loves loves another man, and the world is accordingly all wrong from beginning to end. I confess that it didn't occur to me that Merritt had stuff enough in him to sacrifice himself in that foolish, melodramatic way, until I saw him looking at her in court to-day—it's a good scheme to watch for things like that during a trial; you get all sorts of hints. That was when I got mine. I told you that it is almost impossible for us to guess at the working of a mind like Merritt's—you have to get it out in the open where you can see it before you can get anywhere. That's why I got Sarah to come here, and kept her hidden till we needed her. My guess happened to be right."

What happened to Ben Scullin, Frank's rival, and how Frank and Sarah overcame the very evident obstacles in their path, are other stories.

The Legacy

By

Mrs HENRY DUDENEY

ILLUSTRATED BY W. HATHERELL R.I.

ELIZA SANDILANDS peeped through the parlour door into the shop.

The upper half of that door was glass, and it wore a white muslin curtain pinched in at the waist with a blue ribbon. In the spaces made by the pinching she could see Sandilands her husband.

She spoke of him as Sandilands and with deference.

She could see his big head and the bowl of his dirty pipe. He was always smoking, and that was not business-like. She stood staring at a scene which made her heart sick.

Yet it would go on. It had been, so it would be.

They had always kept a little oil and colour shop in the suburbs. This was their third and their smallest; for Sandilands had twice gone bankrupt.

The postman came into the shop and he left one letter.

Eliza moved away; she laid the supper. Presently Sandilands would put the shutters up. Another day nearly over, and all the days were alike!

But Sandilands did not put the shutters up; he burst into the parlour like a noisy dog.

Something had happened. Her intuition—the delicate intuition of a thoughtful and a cheated woman—told her that.

So the days were not going to be alike!

He shut the door. The letter shook in his hand. He was puffing.

Eliza waited. She—who was always quiet, fatalistic!

His mouth broadened into a silly yet an anguished smile.

"I've been left a fortune," he said. "Don't stare. What do you see in the shop?"

"A customer. I'll go." She slipped past him.

That was just like her. She was never shaken up by anything. He felt aggrieved.

"What a woman you are!" he grumbled, when she came back. "I've been left a fortune, so customers be hanged. My Uncle Joe's dead and he's left me seven hundred."

"You said a fortune, Sandilands."

"Women are never satisfied. Seven hundred's a fortune to us." He gazed at her appealingly.

"That ought to bring in thirty pounds a year," she said. She was looking at him hard, in her quiet, deep way; for she loved him very much. She waited to see what else he would say; she always followed his lead. She believed in him; she stunned herself into believing that she believed. It was her duty as a wife to have trust in Sandilands and to feel proud of him.

"Bring in the supper," he said, "and we'll talk it over."

He made a good supper, and directly he had finished he turned round to the fire and filled his pipe. He always did this. Eliza went on eating in her slow, penurious way; a way that was grim.

Presently she got up and cleared away. When she returned from the kitchen the parlour was blue with tobacco smoke.

Sandilands blinked at her. "Come here,"

he said, imperiously, and when she went he pulled her on to his knee.

She perched there, feeling a silly and not wishing to stop.

"Seven hundred!" he said, and his face was rapt.

"You let me go and sit on the other side of the fire, Sandilands, then we can talk."

He let her go, but he seemed chilled, starved, perplexed.

He could not leave her alone to-night. Presently he knocked out his pipe, put it carefully on the mantelpiece, and squatted on the hearthrug beside her. He had not done this for years. With an impalpable sigh she put down the sock that she was mending.

"Remember," he asked, stroking her sharp knee, "how we used to love the country? In those times when we could afford a trip."

She nodded.

"Let's go and live in the country, Lizzie. We've had a hard time, and this seven hundred is my first bit of luck. You've done all you could, for you're the sort that sticks to a man. But it isn't as if you'd ever earned a penny or as if you'd had a little bit of money when I married you. That might have made all the difference. I've never had capital."

"It might have made a difference," she agreed, and she looked apprehensively at his flushed face, at his hands clawing at her skirt.

"And then they say," she thought, resentfully, "that only women have hysterics!"

"Let's spend it!" he shouted, hilariously.

"But when it is spent, Sandilands?"

"I'm coming to that. Look here, Liz! I've stood in three different oil and colour shops, going bankrupt. I've thought out what I'd do if ever I got left a bit of money. And now I'll do it."

His voice stirred her. It would have frightened her, but she was never afraid.

He flung back his head. "Give me a kiss," he asked, humbly.

She drew back, then shoved herself forward. She was feeling, with forlorn wildness running through her breast, that life had been too hard for kissing and the mood of kissing. She could not change. She could never go back.

She put her lips decorously between his brows and felt that his skin was wet.

"Call that a kiss!" he grumbled.

He stared sullenly into the fire, then he said:—

"Seven hundred would last us three years."

"More than that."

"No"—he was firm—"not a day more than three years. We'll enjoy ourselves at last. We'll have a nice little house and a bit of ground. We'll keep a few fowls, then we can kill a chicken if we want to without thinking twice."

He crawled up on his knees and kissed her, imprisoning her cool and prudent mouth for a long while.

"Now that," he said, dropping childishly back on his heels, "I call a kiss."

He looked into the fire again. Then he said:—

"We could keep bees. I always did like honey."

"You don't know anything about bees."

"I could learn; or you could. You're never afraid."

"Takes a lot to frighten me."

Her eyes did not leave his transformed face.

"Then you wouldn't be afraid at the last?"

When he asked her this, he got up, fumbled himself into his easy-chair, and reached for his pipe.

"I won't have another to-night," he said, finding that he had not nerve enough to fill the bowl.

The yellow tobacco dribbled between his knees, the pipe hung limp in his fingers. She got up and took it from him.

"You wouldn't be afraid at the last?" he repeated, with a heartrending glance.

"What last?"

She was back in her chair, darning.

"When we'd spent the money."

"But it's a sin to spend it. We should have to start all over again."

He looked at her with a blaze in his eyes.

"We've got no children, and we've never been religious; so that won't stop us."

"Stop us, Sandilands?"

"When the last penny's gone, then we'll go too. Got that?"

"Now you *do* frighten me," she said to him, soothingly.

He stood up, he stretched himself. What a great fine man he was! And her man!

"I'm not mad and I'm not drunk," he told her. "But think I haven't fretted my soul out all these years? Think I haven't been—ashamed?"

He looked down. The sock seemed to softly flutter in her moving hands.

"I've made up my mind," he continued, in his masterful way.

"Yes?" she said, softly, and waited.

He studied her passivity with a mystified and irritable awe. That voice of hers! It had never nagged him. It had never inspired. It had never put a thought in his head, for her mind was his mind. Her voice was nothing like lightning. There was no

flash in it. He wondered why he thought of that.

"I've had no luck. I'm worn out. Think I'd start again?" he asked, furiously. "I'll live a gentleman's life for three years, and then—like this! See?"

There were brass candlesticks, that had been her mother's, standing on the shelf. She took a pride in them. She kept them polished, and with new candles that were never lighted. Sandilands lighted one now.

"Like this!" He stared at the flame for a moment, then blew the candle out.

SOME swift silence swept across the little cosy room. They remained rigid. Eliza rose at last. She also was very tall, but she was lean.

"Now what are you driving at?" she asked. Her voice kept its prosy quality, but her gesture menaced him.

"Come here. Don't deny me to-night, old girl. Let me feel you in my arms."

She went to him obediently.

"When the last pound's gone, when I've drawn my last cheque, then we'll put an end to ourselves. But we'll have a good time first, by Heaven we will! The first we've ever had," he whispered, with his sobbing breath hot in her ear.

She said to him, "You go and put the shutters up."

She was quiet, always quiet. But he had never seen a face so awful as hers looked then. These silent women could startle you!

"Shutters!" His arms dropped.

"I can't talk, Sandilands, until we've got the place to ourselves. Why, a customer might come in. You go."

Sandilands went.

She sat down and shut her eyes. The sock with its shining needle threaded in and out dropped to the floor. Until now she had kept it. She was stricken by this astounding decision on the part of a weak man. She had thought until to-night that Sandilands was a coward. Yet he now proposed, when the time came, to kill himself and her! This seemed to her great courage, and when he came back she looked at him with respect.

The shutters were up, the lights in the shop were out. Traffic was a dull sound. They were shut away from all the world.

"Thought it over?" he asked her, kindly.

"I'll do what you want when the time comes, Sandilands."

He threw back his big grey head and laughed. He looked the courting boy that she remembered.

"You've suffered," she said, softly. "I'd have given my fingers and thumbs to save you from suffering."

"Think a man doesn't suffer when his business slips away, when things get muddled up, whatever he does? I've had ideas——"

"You've been full of ideas."

"If I'd pulled off half the things I've thought of, we'd be rich. But I never had any luck, and I lost heart."

His wavering eyes besought hers.

"But now"—he laughed again, then sat down suddenly—"we'll have three years of playing the fool. Though you're never one for a lark."

He glanced impatiently at the severe tenderness of her finely lined face.

"No, I'm not. Seems to me foolishness."

"To-morrow," he told her, "I shall go into the country. I shall have a look round. I'll go to Birdham. Remember our spending a fortnight at Birdham?"

She nodded; then her eyes filled suddenly. She wiped them without any fuss.

"I can get a house there." Sandilands was swept by sheer jubilation. "There'll be plenty of houses in a God-forsaken place like that. I may be gone some days, but you can manage. If I find one I'll take it—for three years. You won't"—he turned impressively—"be afraid—at the end of three years?"

"Not if we go together." She was so resolute and so quiet. "You wouldn't play me any trick? You wouldn't kill yourself and leave me there alone, miles from anywhere?"

"I swear I won't!"

"How would we do it? Not—not blood, Sandilands?"

"No, no. Don't upset yourself." His wild eyes goggled at her parchment-coloured, impassive face.

"Not drowning in dark water—alone? That *would* frighten me. The tide would wash us away from each other."

There was no change in her voice, yet he sensed resolution, imagination, and despair—the things that he had never suspected.

"No, no." He was testy. "Leave it to me. Don't you worry. And look here"—he bent forward—"after to-night we never mention it. After to-night we have our bit of fun."

"I'll never mention it if you don't want me to."

"You won't think of it?"

"What's the good of thinking? Won't stop it."

He sat staring into the fire; she sat darning his sock.

"Sandilands"—she looked up—"couldn't you sell the business?"

"Sell it!" He was enormously tickled. She had relieved him, she changed his current. "If you can sell it you may keep the money. Why, I'm as good as bankrupt again."

"Sandilands burst into the parlour like a noisy dog. Something had happened. Her intuition told her that."

He arose. He slipped that magnetic letter that had come to-night into his pocket.

"Let's go to bed. And, mind"—he towered over her—"not a word about—you know what—now that we've made up our minds."

As they lay wide awake, side by side, in the soft warm dark, he said to her, suddenly, "Could you lay your hands on my light suit and air it in the morning? It's May, after all, and Birdham's such a warm place. Remember how warm it was?"

He chuckled. He was a little boy, looking forward to his treat.

She jumped in the bed. She had been thinking of something else.

"Yes; that'll be all right," she answered, and turned over sharply from him on her side.

HE was away five days. When he came back she was moving about in the shop.

"Taking stock?" he asked, jocosely.

Then he kissed her with a sort of bump, and pushed her before him into the lighted parlour.

"Lizzie"—he fell at once into his elbow-chair—"I've got a house: a snug little place with a bit of garden—outbuildings and all. I've setfled to take over the other chap's wire netting and fowl-house. Why, you've got three cups and saucers on the tray!"

"Yes, Sandilands. I've sold the business."

"You have!"

"Chubb's the gentleman's name; two b's. He's coming to talk it over. I put a card in the window that a business was for sale. And he stepped in. And he'll give fifty pounds."

"Will he? That isn't much."

"He won't give a penny more." She was emphatic.

"Well, I must think it over. And I'm sorry he's coming to-night. I wanted to talk to you about Birdham."

"There's three years for Birdham, dear."

Sandilands stared. But she looked and sounded quite matter-of-fact. She carried away his overcoat and gloves and hat.

She wasn't thinking of what would come after the three years, because she had promised that she wouldn't think, and that was her all over. It would be easy enough for her. But he would always be shoving aside the ugly and the cruel thought. He could not forget, but she had forgotten already.

"That's him," said Eliza, advancing quietly into the shop, and she brought Mr. Chubb back.

She made the two men known to each other, then she slipped behind her tea-tray.

"There's only one thing," she said, as she filled three cups. "I told Mr. Chubb that he must keep up the name of Sandilands for three years."

Sandilands started again and again stared at her. She remained unmoved.

The men did the talking. Sandilands was bumptious. Chubb, who was deprecating, kept looking mutely at Eliza.

"Now, Mr. Chubb, you must talk to Mr. Sandilands, for he's the master," she said, at last.

So they settled it, and after tea Chubb drifted away. He was a limp young man, with wisps of hair that looked a shadeless brown.

"He's a poor ha'porth of soap," said Sandilands. "He won't do much with the business. He's the soft sort—like you."

"You've put his cheque in your pocket-book, haven't you, Sandilands?"

She spoke to him over her shoulder. She carried off the tray, then came back.

"Yes. Why?"

"Because it's mine, that's why. You promised me."

"Promise! That was a joke."

"I didn't do it for a joke, and we keep our word with each other. We always have and we always will."

There was nothing significant in her look; yet he shuddered.

"If you put it like that! If you mean to hold me to what was said as a joke!"

"Yes, I do hold you, dear."

"You can always have what you want for the asking, so long as I've got it myself."

"That isn't the same. I shall put it in the bank, and draw it out when I like and buy what I want."

She was almost gay. The ghost of some archness that he half remembered fluttered across her sedate face.

"We won't quarrel about money. Here you are. Fifty pounds, more or less—what difference?"

He watched her take the cheque and fold it small.

"I'll never be hard on you or close over money again," he said.

He came and kissed her, in the new, riotous way; the revived way that she must get used to.

Then he said, "I haven't endorsed the cheque. Give it back to me."

When he got it, he added, "I'll keep this, of course, and give you one of my own in the morning."

She left him and went to the desk in the corner and brought back his cheque book.

There was something inflexible about her—awful.

So he wrote the cheque for fifty and she put it away.

AT Birdham they were happy. Sandilands was not afraid of going bankrupt.

Yet, when he thought of his oil-shop, he gulped.

He never mentioned it until the three years were up. Then, turning from his desk one Sunday evening, he said :—

"Chubb's opened two branch shops, hasn't he ? "

"Three, dear. One for every year we've been at Birdham."

She was sitting by the open window watching the people go to church.

"He can make it pay, but I went bankrupt. Been to his branch shops ? "

"Yes, Sandilands. I thought I'd like to see. And I've been up in London every week."

"Can't think why you wanted to go. It cost money."

"I'd got the money and I didn't want to lose sight of my old friends. London once a week has done me good."

"Three branch shops. And I went bankrupt."

"Doesn't matter "—her apathy smothered him—"you needn't bother about shops."

"I needn't bother about anything. Come here."

He called her and she went ; just as he had called and she had gone three years ago. She looked into his wild face, saw the secret of his stark eyes, knew that their time had come. It had been drawing towards them with a smooth yet deadly glide. Now it was here. He had drawn a cheque. It lay on the desk. He pointed.

"There's your housekeeping for next week, and that's all. I've paid the rent and there's three pounds left in the bank."

She had known that this must come, and soon. She had, with patient subtlety, marked his varying way of drawing cheques for the last three months.

He spoke quietly, with nobility. His arms went round her.

"We've been comfortable at Birdham," he whispered. "People have been kind. And you've done wonders with the garden and the fowls."

His voice drifted. She could feel the hot blast of his anguished breath.

"I never felt better in my life," he added. "You don't want to—to——"

"No "—she was steady—"I want to stay on, but we swore."

"Yes, it was as good as swearing." His head dropped to that sharp yet yielding ledge—her shoulder.

"Come and sit by the window, Sandilands."

She pulled him and he went.

Church bells were ringing for the evening service. They had refused to go to church, although the clergyman and his wife called and were most friendly. Everyone was kind in this simple, far-away place where the air was soft and warm and sleepy.

They were consistent. They did not go to church.

They sat speechless by the open window, for what was there to say ?

Sandilands could see tomatoes trained against the south wall and heavy with green fruit. Tomatoes were his darlings, and he grew them better than anyone in Birdham. To grow tomatoes was the one thing that he did well.

They sat until the room grew dark. There was no moon to-night. Terror grew in the parlour and every voice that sounded in the road became a personal threat. Sandilands licked his dry lips and he swallowed hard. He blew his nose and then he sneezed. "I've got a cold," he said.

Eliza never answered and her silence seemed satirical.

For what did it matter if he'd got a cold —now ! He wriggled in his chair and tilted it and scraped it on the floor until she said, placidly :—

"How you do fidget ! "

"Good thing, Lizzie, that we haven't got a pet dog or a cat. We should hate to leave it behind."

"We shouldn't leave it behind."

She spoke so calmly ; yet, to him, there was some frightful and well-ordered method behind that limp voice. He was in awe of her. He did not know her and he never had. Yet she was his wife.

"Lizzie ! I've got something—something to send us to sleep."

"Yes."

He could feel that she was nodding.

He leapt forward, gripping her two hands, lifting them from her stiff lap, ruffling their utter lassitude.

"Get up and light the gas," he besought, letting her go suddenly.

When it was lighted they faced each other ; Sandilands was shamefaced, strange, and shy. He sneezed again.

"Better shut the window. I've got a deuce of a cold."

She shut it.

They went and sat by the empty fireplace. It was the shivering, human demand.

"If it was laid I'd put a match to it, Sandilands. Remember how you always would have a fire in the parlour behind the shop right up till midsummer ? But it's nice and warm at Birdham all the year round."

"Doesn't matter about a fire," he said, dully.

He was filling his pipe and he dropped it, as he had done upon that other night. She picked it up and put it right away. Was

she thinking that he would never want it any more ?

The little room was brilliant, ugly ; snug, and—to them—unduly dear. This house at Birdham was their first true home.

Eliza had been free to manage things and she had managed well. Her fingers were magic ; everything seemed to blossom and fruit. So they had lived in luxury.

Sandilands had been safe and comfortable. He was a harmless man, and these were his only demands. Drama sat upon him like an ill-cut coat.

YET often through this easy life the great dread had come. He pushed it away with the flat of his hands ; yet he knew all along that he had only three years to live. And to-night, this Sunday night, the future was the present. Their time had ended, their time had come !

" I'll have a cigar." He roused himself. " I've got two left."

That had been one of his luxuries at Birdham, a good cigar after dinner every Sunday.

" You've had one already to-day. It won't upset you ? "

" Upset me ! " He stared. " What's that matter ? "

What did she mean ? What was going on in her head all this time ? He hated her placid face and idle hands. She never sewed on Sundays.

He fetched the cigar, and then he put it down.

" I won't have one, if you'd rather not," he said, sullenly. After a pause, he added : " We've got to go some time or the other. It's a better way—the way we're doing it—than a long illness or an operation. I've always dreaded an operation."

" I know you have."

" My people don't make old bones, but yours live for ever."

He was thinking of her relations : lean old women, gnarled old men, and most of them living round ninety.

He choked. His eyes changed. His mad glare filled the room. He blundered up, then flopped down. He was kneeling at her feet, as he had kneeled that other night. He was kissing her, and he had kissed her then.

But this was a more poignant caress : it was finer, wilder. That night he had seemed a young man, in spite of his grey head. To-night he was unearthly, old.

" I've got the stuff," he said, falling back upon his heels at last and looking into her eyes.

" When did you get it ? " She was sharp with him.

" Day before we came to Birdham."

Then she respected him, and he was, to her mind, heroic. He was not always Sandilands going bankrupt, Sandilands smoking his pipe. He had bought the stuff. He had kept it by him. He had never said a word.

" Sandilands "—she was grave, she coaxed him in her serious way—" we could make a nice living selling things. We've had more than we could eat. I've got two hundred eggs put down, and a cupboard full of jam, and enough honey to——"

" No buying and selling for me ! " He became violent.

" I could manage a pig if we had one," she persisted. " And then there's vegetables. It would mean hard work and getting up early."

" Think I'd get up early, after breakfast in bed for three years ? "

" I've spoiled you." She was almost arch. " That's having no children."

Sandilands started up ; he walked about. Then he turned on her.

" Where's that fifty Chubb paid ? "

" I've been waiting for you to ask me that, dear. I spent it every penny ; and it was mine to spend."

" Yes, it was yours right enough."

He looked funny, and he knew now that he had been counting on that fifty.

She was like a man, with her plain black bodice, her stern face, and her rigid hair.

He sat down stiffly in the chair opposite. Suddenly he burst out crying, rubbing his big knuckles into his big eyes. He was making an ass of himself, but he did not care. To-morrow, or the next day, or next week perhaps, he would be dead. She also would be dead. She, with her quiet voice and her noiseless feet, would be quieter than ever.

" It's funny what a little thing upsets you," he frankly sobbed. " I was thinking of my tomatoes, and they bowled me over. I did want to see them turn red ! "

Eliza seemed to pause, to pull herself together, to prepare to spring. She went to him.

" Stand up," she said, in her dull way.

Then something swift, hungry, and violent overtook her. She changed. She flung her arms round him. It was a new passion, and he was staggered. Her arms were as long as his and harder. She set that blubbering form upon its feet.

" It isn't as if you'd got a bit put by in a stocking. Lots of wives manage that."

" Stocking ! " She sounded light. " You come upstairs and look at my stockings. You watch me unroll every pair and you won't find sixpence."

She laughed. It was very rarely that she laughed. Sometimes a dry chuckle dropped from her like grain ; but this was a laugh.

Her mood of caprice—her first caprice—

"They sat speechless by the open window, for what was there to say?"

startled Sandilands, and it cleared his head. Even when they were courting she had been serious, painstaking.

"We mustn't lose our nerve," he said. "We said we'd do it when we'd spent the money—and why the dickens do you keep on laughing?"

She was going mad, that was it. Poor soul! It was too much for her. Presently she would start shouting. All the village would come running in.

"I'm not mad," she said, with her eyes fixed upon him.

"You're not? Then I'm hanged if I know what you're driving at!"

"Sandilands, the branch shops are yours; all three, and the other shop too. Chubb's managed for me, that's all. I gave him the fifty pounds to pay you with. It was my savings, dear."

She was quiet now. She spoke now in her commonplace way, and the fire died out of her face. Sandilands' eyes were popping from his head.

"You're a deep one!" he said, indescribably.

She seemed to hesitate, then she loosed her arms from him and went staidly to her chair. He watched her go. He stared through the window towards the dark garden.

"Thinking of tomatoes, Sandilands?"

Who and what was she, this woman, his wife, who had worked such wonders? He had gone bankrupt three times—or as good as. She had three branch shops! His shame and pique shook him; his exuberant faith in masculinity lay dead.

He was grateful, relieved, redeemed. They were well-to-do and they could always live at Birdham. Yet this was not the ending he had meant. For three long years he had been screwing himself up to something big.

And why? Where was the good? In a sense, he was cheated. She was half play-actress and half puzzle. He had never known her.

"Why didn't you tell me before?" he demanded. "You've known all along. It's been downright cruel."

Her eyebrows implied the faintest, mildest lifting.

"But, Sandilands, we said three years."

And again he looked at her. Then, half reluctant, he crossed the room, fell to his knees with a blustering sigh, and put his head down on her passive lap.

ACROSTICS.

DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 88.

A HALF-CRAZED youth, a pale-faced heroine,
The titles of two famous tales are seen.

1. To show the equivalent of what we need,
Each light one letter yields; in order read.

2. Not here, but elsewhere, may be sound defence,
Tending to prove a prisoner's innocence.

3. Picture the scene: the waiting crowd outspread,
The block, the word, the cut. Off with the head.

4. Though bowl and bottles have acquired some fame,
What here concerns us is the father's name.

5. She follows one whose anagram must please;
Perhaps her tears and smiles are meant to tease.

6. Asleep on guard? Think of his tender years!
What prowess, too, in later life, appears!

7. It should not be a rhyming word to find
Enclosure which three feet will bring to mind.

8. College gives Doctor, find his servant's name,
And then behead a word that means the same.

9. Take one of four. Perchance it may suggest
An adder. Lose one letter keep the rest.

10. River or view. And if we alter here
Our leading letter, synonym is clear.

11. Give central third of writer's name: the first
Is Eastern name, the last a noun reversed.

12. Three little hints her name may well provide:
Antonio, happy wood, when Cæsar died.

PAX.

Answers to Acrostic No. 88 should be addressed to the Acrostic Editor, THE STRAND MAGAZINE, *Southampton Street, Strand, London, W.C.2, and must arrive not later than by the first post on November 10th.*

Two answers may be sent to every light.

It is essential that solvers, with their answers to this acrostic, should send also their real names and addresses.

ANSWER TO No. 87.

1.	P	revis	H
2.	A	ugerea	U
3.	T	o	M
4.	I	r	I
5.	E	ase	L
6.	N	aphtal	I
7.	C	oa	T
8.	E	conom	Y

NOTES.—Light 3. Tom, tomtom. 4. Iris.

Correspondents who write to the Acrostic Editor and desire answers should enclose stamped addressed envelopes with their letters, and the A.E. will endeavour to reply. Lack of space makes it impossible to answer in print.

The "Lesbia" quotation in No. 85 is from Tom Moore's Irish Melodies. More than a hundred solvers were incorrect in this light.

Law and Laughter

Some Legal Oddities

by "CHASE WAXE"

MANY people still entertain Mr. Bumble's belief that the Law is "a ass," and keep as far away as possible from the animal's heels. As a matter of fact, the law, as it exists to-day, is a very intelligent creature, capable of great adaptation and ready for any kind of emergency. Everyone is presumed to be familiar with the law, but not many folk have any idea of the almost maternal care with which it safeguards their most intimate and private concerns and how small is the scope for wrongdoing without punishment. How many people who are in the habit of theatre-going and of signifying their approval or disapproval in the usual way are aware that, although they may lawfully hiss as individuals, yet if a number of persons go to a theatre by arrangement and hiss in concert they may be indicted for conspiracy? Sunday trading is another example of the very general misconception which exists on legal matters. What fishmonger could tell you that if you desire to purchase mackerel on Sunday you may do so only before or after Divine service? Your barber, too, may shave you on a Sunday, but milk can only be sold before nine o'clock.

There is a law, though it is seldom enforced, under which every labourer, sailor, or soldier, "profanely cursing or swearing, must on conviction forfeit one shilling to the poor." This is extended in the case of every other person under the degree of gentleman to a penalty of two shillings, while a gentleman or person of superior rank has to pay five shillings for the privilege. It is possible that the practice, said to be common in the case of hard swearers, of putting a penny in the poor-box for every swear-word used is associated in some way with this enactment, coupled, if so, with the very natural desire to get off cheaply. If your chimney-sweep, anxious to commence his day early, rings the door-bell of your house to the annoyance of your neighbour, or uses "any noisy instrument," he is liable to a penalty of ten shillings for each offence, and it is possible that you might yourself be liable to a like penalty for aiding and abetting him, notwithstanding the fact that your only concern at the time was that he should go away in great haste and leave you in bed in peace.

a supporter of the poor

IT is generally assumed that a person driving along a high road is bound by law to keep to the left, but in point of fact he is not forced to keep to any particular side of the road when the road is clear. He has a duty, however, to maintain a sharp look-out and get out of the way of vehicles which are on the proper side. It is also the driver's business to take thought for foot-passengers and to see that he does not injure them, since the highway is as much for their use as for his. In these days of motor traffic, however, when pedestrians have been classified into two classes—the quick and the dead—it is not considered advisable to leave all the thought-taking to the drivers. But if a foot-passenger is bold enough to sally forth from the pavement without

looking about him, and is still alive when he reaches the other side of the road, he may flatter himself that he has vindicated a legal principle.

The activities of photographers and the indiscretions of a certain class of newspaper have made many people deplore the fact that as yet no right of privacy or freedom from observation is known to our law. If your likeness is exhibited in wax effigy at a waxwork show or reproduced in a paper, your only course is the rather doubtful one of bringing an action for libel. Likewise the petty annoyances to which your neighbours may subject you, if so minded, by peering in at your windows or otherwise disturbing your privacy, would appear to leave you without a remedy. Formerly the Common Law took some notice of such things. "Eavesdropping, such as listening under walls and windows or the eaves of houses to hearken after discourse and thereupon to frame slanderous and mischievous tales," was a common nuisance and as such indictable at Sessions and punishable by a fine, but the law to-day does not concern itself with bad manners. Some years ago a dentist sought in vain for protection against the annoyance and indignity to which a neighbouring family subjected him by placing in their garden such an arrangement of mirrors as enabled them to observe all that passed in his operating-room.

Embracing!

Many people cordially dislike serving on a jury, and varied are the attempts which are made to escape the obligation. Certain classes of people are exempt from jury service, but few (if any) unwilling jurors sit down and rehearse their past lives to see if they have ever been outlawed or convicted of treason, felony, or other infamous crime, or if they have omitted to learn to write their names. If so, they need not worry about their jury paper (if they have one), since they would be not only exempt from jury service, but would be in fact ineligible therefor. There are, however, several advantages attaching to the position of juror. A juror cannot be arrested on his way to and from the court, to assault him is a high misdemeanour, and to embrace him or attempt to do so is punishable by fine or imprisonment. But let not the honest juryman anxious for some show of affection by plaintiff or defendant picture himself clasped in loving arms either before or after his verdict. Embracing is defined by the Act of Parliament which makes it an offence as an attempt to influence a jury corruptly by promises, entreaties, money, entertainment, and the like. Things are not always what they seem, even in law. Thus "owling" has nothing to do with catching owls, but consists in the clandestine transport of wool and sheep out of the country.

THE man who plays golf on Sunday instead of going to church, if he is not a Dissenter, is committing an offence against an Act of Edward VI. For this offence he could, until 1845, have been fined a shilling for every omission, but this is not now the case. He is, however, still liable to ecclesiastical censure, though he cannot be fined, and ecclesiastical censure would in itself operate as a fine, for he might be "admonished" to go to church or to do penance, and would certainly be liable to pay the costs of the proceedings.

The position of married women has changed greatly in the last fifty years, and there is little to be said about it to-day from the husband's point of view. In the old days the married woman was associated in the minds of most legal writers (on account of her disabilities) with lunatics and idiots. To-day she is the spoilt child of the law. Then she had practically no rights. Her husband could imprison and beat her. He took practically the whole of her property, and could dole out to her as much or as little as he pleased. To-day she can not only possess property, but can under certain circumstances retain it against her creditors. If the house in which husband and wife reside belongs to the wife as her separate property, she can lock her husband out of it. Gone is his prescriptive right to beat, gone his powers of detention. Truly the dutiful husband of a hundred years ago, if he could revisit the scene of his activities, might well exclaim that marriage to-day was little more than a somewhat expensive way of revoking a will.

The common notice "Trespassers will be prosecuted," which has been the bane of so many lovers of the open air, and which still "lifts its head and lies" all over the countryside, is, as far as the ordinary walking

tourist is concerned, scarcely worth the board it is painted on. Trespassers can only be prosecuted if they are doing appreciable damage to the land or anything on it, or if the trespass is committed in pursuit of game. Otherwise, if in taking a short cut you are confronted with such a notice, the best thing to do is to proceed as unostentatiously as possible until the owner or occupier orders you off. Then it is time to offer your apologies and depart gracefully. Failing this, the owner may use sufficient force to remove the trespasser; but he must be careful, for if too much force is used an action will lie for assault. The owner's only other remedy is the somewhat expensive process of an action at law, and so long as the trespasser departs when requested to do so, and has done no damage, he is not likely to hear anything more about the matter.

If a lady should suffer the misfortune to lose her pet dog, and is minded to insert an advertisement offering a reward for its return, she should beware of adding as an inducement to the thief the statement that no questions will be asked. If she does she may find that that very troublesome and unscrupulous person known as the common informer is on her tracks in pursuit of a penalty of fifty pounds; and the odds are that she will have to pay up and be mulcted in costs as well.

THERE are some few of the lesser-known provisions and penalties which for our sins or our salvation are still with us. Some of them, as has been well said, savour of a tariff rather than a code—a relic perhaps of earlier times when our law-givers had a price for every deed of violence and could provide with engaging directness of speech, "If one man strike another on the nose—three shillings." But it must not be assumed that because our early legislators could be concise they were also merciful, or even, according to our modern notions, just.

Ecclesiastical censure!

If we probe, however superficially, into the history of the law we may well be horrified at the ghastly skeletons and spectres we encounter. The last hundred years have witnessed great and sweeping legal reforms, but many of them were long overdue. In 1800 we find more than two hundred capital crimes; that is, crimes punishable by death. To pretend unlawfully to be a Greenwich pensioner was to run the risk of being hanged. The same fate awaited any soldiers and sailors found begging without a pass. Until 1887, under an old Act of Richard II., it was prohibited that none, under grievous pain, should be so hardy as to utter and tell lies or false stories of the peers and great men of the realm.

The barbarous mixture of English, bad Latin, and worse French in which our lawyers chose to express themselves died hard, and has given place to language which is at least intelligible if not artistic. The student suffers, for he no longer experiences the exquisite thrill of finding among the reports such gems as the story of a Chief Justice of the Common Bench who was assaulted by a prisoner "que ject un brickbat a le dit Justice que narrowly mist"; but the interests of the community have been furthered.

EVERYBODY knows how important a part the decisions of our Courts play in the interpretation of our laws. These decisions have been reported from very early times, and often make curious reading. It is remarkable, however, that very few of our writers on the social life of bygone days have troubled to search the old reports, which, despite their dullness and quaint phraseology, often throw the most interesting sidelights on everyday life. Thus, in an action brought in 1771, we find the plaintiff alleging that the island of Minorca was "in London aforesaid in the Parish of St. Mary le Bow in the ward of Cheap." The fact that this allegation was a mere legal fiction, invented in order to found a venue at Westminster, makes it none the less surprising. A livery-keeper's scale of charges in 1863 is given as follows: "seven-and sixpence for riding; for jumping and larking one guinea." In the present days of crowded travelling it is scarcely to be believed that bus-conductors could ever have quarrelled in the road as to

which had the better claim to three ladies as fares. Yet this happened at Knightsbridge in 1862, and as a result there was a collision and one of the buses was overturned. It is interesting, too, to read of the beautiful daughter of one Mr. Very, a Regent Street confectioner, who in 1802 attracted such notice that over three hundred people used daily to assemble round the windows of the shop and stand there and watch her. Police-constables were obliged to be in constant attendance from day to day to check the crowd, until the matter was effectually dealt with by the young lady being sent into the country. Coming to more modern times, it may be noted that one learned judge was accustomed to describe the correspondence read to him in court as "parasitic vermin," and that while threats and actual violence have failed to drive judges from their courts, yet a most vile and poisonous smell was effective in clearing Appeal Court II. in 1886.

Failing this - the owner may use sufficient force to remove the trespasser - but he must be careful—!!

THE legal notoriety gained by litigants is sometimes out of all proportion to the subject matter of the lawsuit. The six carpenters, for instance, who on a hot summer's day in the year 1610 entered a London wine tavern called the Queen's Head, in the parish of St. Giles extra Cripplegate, to quench their thirst little thought that the events of that afternoon would have kept their memory green for three hundred years. The name of only one of the carpenters has survived to us, and he was called Thomas Newman, but their deeds are known to all lawyers. Once inside the wineshop "they did then and there buy and drink a quart of wine," for which they paid. But their thirst was great and, agreeably to their request, one John Ridding, servant to mine host, John Vaux, "did there and then deliver them another quart of wine and a pennyworth of bread amounting to eightpence, and then they did drink the said wine and eat the bread," but for some reason best known to themselves the worthy carpenters refused to pay. High words and even blows passed, the host being less long suffering than was Falstaff's host at the Garter, and it would appear that the six carpenters, not without a struggle, were ejected. In our times the whole matter would have ended in the police-court. But they were more deliberate in those days, and Vaux solemnly brought his action, not for the price of the wine, but for trespass against the carpenters for their entry into his premises and for assault and battery. The point to be decided was whether this non-payment made the original entry into the tavern illegal, whether, in fact, the six carpenters were trespassers *ab initio*, and the case is still a leading one on the point. The Court said No—"not doing is no trespass." But what the Court said is of small moment compared with the picture conjured up by the proceedings and the glimpse they give us of London tavern life in the days of Shakespeare. One cannot help wondering even now why the six carpenters refused to pay for that second quart of wine.

THE question as to the amount of force one is entitled to use in self-defence has troubled lawyers for a very long time, and it may be interesting to note that as long ago as 1708 it was decided that if a man pokes his finger into your eye you are not entitled to bite him. In the case in point (Cockroft *v.* Smith) the plaintiff, an officer of Excise, tilted up a form on which Smith sat, whereby Smith fell to the ground. A scuffle ensued; Cockroft's finger found its way into Smith's eye and then into his mouth, with the result that Smith promptly bit it off at the joint. The

question was whether Smith was justified in his biting, and the Court said No. "No man is entitled to give a violent and unsuitable return: hitting a man a little blow is not a reason for him to draw a sword and cut and hew the other." There have been some curious decisions, too, as to what constitutes an assault. Thus, throwing water at a person, on the strength of a very old authority, is an assault, and if it hits him or her (in the case in question it was a "her") it is battery. Words cannot amount to an assault, nor can singing, though there is evidence of an earlier contrary opinion. In the words of a legal rhymester, quoted by Sir F. Pollock in his work on "Torts":—

No questions asked!

For Meade's case proves, or my Report's in fault,
That singing can't be reckoned an assault.

Mr. Scott, of Milbourne Port, and his defendant, Mr. Shepherd, have both come down to posterity in consequence of a rather curious accident which occurred on October 28th, 1770. It was Milbourne Fair day, and Shepherd, being given to practical joking, threw a lighted squib into the crowded market-house. The squib lighted upon the stall of a gingerbread-seller, who, to protect himself, caught it and threw it away across the market-house. It fell again upon another gingerbread stall, whose owner instantly and to save his goods from being damaged passed it on again. Then followed the tragedy. The squib exploded in the face of one Scott and put out his eye. As says the poet:—

By two mesne tossings thus it got
To burst in the face of the plaintiff Scott.

Scott brought his action against the original thrower of the squib, who pleaded that so much had happened since the thing left his hands that he had ceased to be connected with it in any way, but the Court upheld the verdict, and damages (one hundred pounds) were awarded to Scott by a sympathetic jury on the ground that a man must be presumed to have contemplated all the consequences of his unlawful act, and Shepherd left the court a sadder and a wiser man.

so hardy as to utter and tell lies and false stories of the Peers and Great men of the Realm

Two Hours to Train-Time

by Royal Brown

ILLUSTRATED BY E. F. SHERIE

IN the small wee hours David Travers came suddenly awake. The door of his room, which he had—as usual—neglected to lock, had opened. The sudden stir of air would have indicated that even if his eyes, with all vestiges of slumber startled out of them, had not assured him that somebody was bearing down upon him. He had no time to consider the apparition, however, before he found himself, as he believed for a tense instant, feloniously attacked.

The sheet, which was his sole covering—the night was hot, contrary to the inn's averment that all nights were cool there—was sharply drawn back and something hot and damp was plumped down on his quivering chest.

"There!" announced a voice, before he could find his own. "Perhaps that will make you feel better."

This was to be doubted. He had seldom felt worse. The intruder was unquestionably feminine, and he had an awful premonition that she was young and pretty. And although he had the repeated assurances of his sister that a pretty girl wouldn't bite him, he had a deplorable habit of acting as if he feared one might. On the slightest provocation!

So he lay there, thoroughly alarmed but quite speechless.

A small, cool hand searched out his forehead.

"Are you sure you're not feverish, dear?" she murmured. "Don't you think perhaps I'd better call the doctor——"

Her voice suddenly dwindled off. She had come into contact with his hair, which, though rigorously cut to masculine requirements, was crisp and luxuriant.

"Oh!" she cried, sharply. "I—I must have made a mistake!"

Travers agreed with her perfectly, but lacked words to say so. Anyway, she paused for no further explanations, but fled incontinently. He, after an appreciable interval, glanced at his wrist-watch. The luminous dial informed him it was almost four. He gingerly removed the warm damp something which still reposed on his chest and, arising, switched on the light and regarded it.

Obviously it was a poultice. The humour of the incident, which would have strongly appealed to most men, failed to reach him. He felt thoroughly upset—outraged almost.

Nevertheless, he blamed, not his visitor, but Evelyn.

Evelyn was his sister. Once he had patronized her as is an older brother's privilege. Now, as a young matron of twenty-four, she patronized him, and, worse still, persecuted him with deadly persistence. Like so many young matrons, she had developed a monomania, the same having to do with the subject of matrimony.

"The trouble with you," she assured him, "is that you can't say 'boo' to a pretty girl."

This was true—not, however, that he admitted it. To Evelyn he maintained that it was no lack of courage, but a deep-seated indifference to pretty girls that actuated him. Evelyn, who, to use his own ungracious

phrase, always had some girl or other she wanted him to meet, refused to be convinced.

"Bosh!" she retorted. "Faint heart never won fair lady——"

(This particular conversation had taken place five days before, in her pretty living room.)

"Who wants to?" he riposted.

"Any man who's not a born fool does sooner or later," she declared. "Love——"

"Love!" His voice was sardonic, his gesture cynical. "Somebody introduces you to a girl. You look her over, decide to call on her, send her flowers. She displays her wares, you yours. You examine your emotions as cold-bloodedly as a physician taking your pulse."

"What do you know about it?" demanded Evelyn.

"Then you pop the question," he went on, inexorably. "Her father does the interviewing act, and, if your assets are acceptable, there's a big wedding. After that you live more or less unhappily ever afterwards——"

"Do you think that describes me and Ted?" Evelyn asked, indignantly.

"Taking a general remark and making it personal is a feminine failing——"

"*Do* you?" she persisted.

"Of course not," he admitted. But, too wise to leave her in undisputed possession of the field, he attacked again, from another angle. "But let me ask you this: Supposing Ted had been a coalheaver or a plumber—would you have *let* yourself fall in love with him?"

"I would!" she declared, defiantly

"Not on your life!" he retorted. "That's just what I'm driving at. That is what love has degenerated to—something you turn on and off like hot and cold water. Romance is no longer good form. Personally, I prefer to have a girl marry me for myself——"

"What else would a girl marry you for?" she interposed, bitingly. "You're not exactly a Rothschild."

"And that," he maintained, firmly, "is my reason for chucking the game. I don't like the way it's played nowadays."

Which, surely, was a logical and plausible explanation, as anybody must admit—anybody, that is, but Evelyn.

"You make me sick," she assured him. "You know perfectly well that you simply get stage-fright and run when you see a pretty girl."

"'You know perfectly well,' she assured him, 'that you simply get stage-fright and run when you see a pretty girl.'"

From that point the argument had degenerated lamentably into mutual recrimination, that, as he reflected afterwards, being the inevitable result of trying to talk sensibly to a woman—especially if she happens to be your sister. She had egged him into ill-considered bravado. Then she had sprung her mine.

"All right," she declared. "Prove it."

"What do you mean?" he asked, with quick suspicion. "If you have some girl that you're going to throw at my head——"

"All that I ask is that you do something——"

She paused and considered, while he regarded her uneasily.

"I dare you to go to the inn at Gull Point," she resumed. "There are simply loads of pretty girls there this year."

"It's hardly worth the bother," he interrupted, hastily. "I'd be bored to death. And why should I put myself out to prove to you——"

"I'll make you a proposition. If you will spend just one week there and make the acquaintance of just one girl who isn't a perfect fright, I'll—I'll never bother you again. What do you say?"

"Oh!" he announced, airily. "You don't really bother me very much."

"Trying to slip out of it!" she accused, scornfully. "*Will you go?*"

He hesitated, and was lost.

"I will," he assured her, grimly—grimly because he felt rather like Daniel about to enter the lions' den.

"And if you don't prove it," she went on, relentlessly, "I'm to give a party and invite every pretty girl I know—and you'll be the only man there——"

"Look here," he interrupted.

"And you can prove your perfect poise and imperturbability *that* way," she finished, inexorably.

SO, on Saturday, Travers had arrived at the inn at Gull Point. Since then four days had elapsed, and all he had proved so far was that the mere presence of pretty girls in his immediate vicinity gave him all the symptoms one can find described in the most enterprising patent medicine advertisement—and gooseflesh to boot. He had made the acquaintance of none of them, nor, Heaven helping him, would he. So far Heaven had helped him, although he had had narrow escapes.

Now, at almost four in the morning, he stood in his bedroom, visibly agitated.

"This," he decided, "settles it. I'll get out the first thing to-morrow."

On this high resolve he finally slept—after carefully taking heed for once of the inn's suggestion that:—

"Guests are requested to use due care in locking their doors. The Inn Company will not hold itself responsible for money or valuables unless deposited in the safe at the office."

Obviously they would not hold themselves responsible, either, for guests being poulticed.

Breakfast was a fearful ordeal; he felt a hidden significance behind every casual glance. It was almost as if he wore the poultice on his chest for everyone to see, as the Ancient Mariner wore the albatross. When it was over, at last, he fled to his room and packed his bag.

It was as yet only a quarter to ten; the train did not leave until a quarter to twelve. He had two hours to kill.

The chance of another encounter with the purveyor of poultices—bearing not poultices but apologies—weighed him down beyond reason. He would have sulked in his room, like Achilles in his tent, had not the chambermaid hovered outside persistently and significantly.

Whereupon Travers descended in search of some other sanctuary. The lobby offered none for such as he, nor did the wide veranda. There, in fact, were several gloriously ornamental young creatures who burst into giggling the moment he appeared. Travers, thrusting into his pockets hands that seemed self-conscious enough to have blushed, sauntered with too apparent assumption of ease down on to the beach.

This, contrary to the information found in geographies, was a desert of feminity, with here and there a scant oasis of sand. He selected one of these, seated himself, and producing a cigarette lit it. He wondered if those confounded chits—of such ungallantry was he guilty—were giggling at him. Had they heard? Had everybody heard?

The day was such as August sometimes brings forth, warm, yet with the hint of cooler days at hand.

A few feet away from him were a man and a girl. A green and white striped beach umbrella all but hid them from him, but he could see their hands, working at hollowing a little pit in the sand as they talked. The fingers touched now and then in a way that suggested a fugitive caress. The man's fingers patently tried to stress and prolong this, the girl's skilfully eluded. But hers always returned, Travers noted, cynically. Love? Perhaps so! But suppose he were a plumber or a coalheaver——

The cigarette he held, too long ignored, retaliated by scorching his fingers. He flung it from him, hastily and without thought, but with instant consternation. It missed her, however, though only by inches. She had come from behind and now stood gazing at a cocky youngster who was paddling a

cance beyond the breakers. Travers, following her glance, gave the canoeist a moment of critical attention, concluding that if he didn't get a dump it wouldn't be his fault. Then his eyes came back.

The golden-brown jersey swimming-suit she wore was designed for service and trimly moulded to her figure. Its tones blended marvellously with the beautiful tan of her neck and arms and the warm tints of her hair. She was neither tall nor short, but lithe, and the lines of her shoulders and slim straight back were worthy of prolonged consideration. He gave them that, albeit furtively, as she seated herself. Then he hastily averted his eyes as her casual survey of her surroundings encompassed him.

One would hardly have believed she saw him, yet he suffered all the inevitable symptoms of his malady. But for once he felt an unallied emotion, an angry impatience. What was the matter with him, anyway? He was twenty-eight, not at all bad-looking—as Evelyn had generously assured him—and he wasn't wholly witless. He could talk to a pretty girl's mother—or her grandmother—in a way that visibly charmed them. But the pretty girl herself! He'd rather be boiled in oil——

AT that moment memory arose and smote him. In his determination to flee the inn he had been akin to whatever it is that, endeavouring to escape the frying-pan, falls into the fire. He had forgotten the party Evelyn had proposed as a forfeit, with his luckless self as the sole man among all the pretty girls she could gather.

To him, at that instant, the ends of the earth presented attractions tourist agencies wot not of.

"I didn't agree to that, anyway," he assured himself. "I won't stand it. I'll put my foot down——"

Unfortunately, however, he was well aware that Evelyn would maintain steadfastly that he had agreed, and that, though he put his foot down fifty times, she would bob up serenely from under it. Desperation assailed him; he looked about as if hoping for aid from some unsuspected quarter. His tortured glance fell upon the girl in front of him.

There she sat. Here he sat. They were both alone. Suppose he should go to her and say, with calm assurance:—

"You are very beautiful."

Fiction had assured him, repeatedly, that men did things just like that. But then, in fiction it always turned out that the girl had gone to college with the man's sister or something like that and had recognized him at once. Still, she couldn't call a policeman—but then, perhaps she could.

The blood pounded in his ears, his tongue had suddenly gone dry. The idea had taken possession of him, it had become an obsession. He was urging himself to throw off, with one supreme effort, this absurd shyness and almost morbid self-consciousness that made his life miserable.

Too much thinking had indeed made him a little mad.

He found himself rising, he heard himself essay speech.

"You—it's a—a beautiful day," he croaked.

Her glance inspected him from head to foot, and then, an additional and unwarranted cruelty, reversed the process. Apparently, however, she had no intention of calling a policeman.

"Did you think I hadn't noticed it?" she drawled.

Travers's flush was painful to behold. But she was without pity.

"N no," he managed.

"Then why mention it?" she remarked, and looked out to sea.

Travers felt like a worm which has been stepped on. But, as copy-books have borne testimony through generations, even a worm will turn.

"What I m-meant to say was that you are b-beautiful," he persisted.

She glanced up quickly. "Oh!" she exclaimed, a little uncertainly. Then, recovering herself, "Did you think I hadn't noticed that?"

Travers dropped to the sand—literally dropped. He felt like a man who has undergone a major operation, and his legs refused to hold him up longer.

The girl surveyed him, her eyebrows—even at that moment he was dimly conscious that they were really admirable—slightly raised.

"Legally," she submitted, "I suppose you have a right to sit anywhere on the beach. But there are certain conventions that——"

The perspiration that beaded his brow was not all due to the sun's glow.

"It's the conventions that I don't like," he broke in.

"So I observe," she commented. "Why?"

"Because they take all the romance out of life." He was talking haphazardly—but it happened to be the only way he could talk just then.

"Are you seeking romance?"

Travers nodded, speech failing him. All he sought at the moment was a place in the sand to stick his head into, ostrich-wise.

"Do you do it often?" Her voice was impersonally interrogative. "If so, how do you manage to keep out of the police-court?"

Travers achieved the seemingly impossible. He blushed a shade deeper. He was given brief respite, however. The cocky youngster was coming in. The crest of an onrushing comber caught his canoe and carried it shoreward with irresistible momentum. It slued about in the curl and nearly capsized. Fortune was with its navigator; it slid up on to the sand half-full of water but still right side up.

The girl caught her breath and so far forgot herself as to exclaim:—

"Didn't he do that wonderfully well?"

"He should have moved farther forward," Travers replied. "That would have kept her nose down, and instead of sluing about and taking in all that water she would have come in as clean as a whistle."

She gave him a quick, hostile glance. This he missed, being intent on the youth, who, believing—and not without some foundation—that he was the cynosure of all eyes, was letting the water run out of the canoe. This accomplished he drew it up on to the beach and proceeded magnificently to the bathing pavilion.

"Could you have done it any better?" she demanded.

"Why—I have had some experience," Travers replied, self-conscious once more.

"Can two people do it?" she demanded, quickly.

He nodded.

She sprang up. "Let's," she announced.

IT took Travers by surprise. He so far forgot his manners as to stare up at her, without rising. "You and me?" he questioned.

She nodded, ever so blithely. "We'll borrow his canoe—and explain afterwards."

This, Travers thought, might not be as simple as all that, but he let it pass.

"My bathing-suit is packed——" he began.

"Oh," she broke in, with an intonation that was not the least flattering. "Do you need a bathing-suit?"

"I'll have to wade in to launch the canoe."

She surveyed him scornfully. "I thought," she remarked, bitingly, "that you were seeking romance. I didn't realize that to be romantic you had to carry a full change of costume——"

It struck Travers suddenly that she had had no idea he would go; she had just taken this way of getting her revenge. He sprang up.

"Can you swim?" he demanded.

It was her turn to look surprised. "Why—yes," she admitted.

"All right, then. Come along."

She did not move. "You'll go?"

"Why not?" he retorted—and even Evelyn, had she been there, must have rendered him tribute.

The girl hesitated ever so briefly and then her chin went up. Without another word she led the way to the canoe. Travers, realizing that they had reached the point where neither could retreat, slid down to the water's edge. There he turned to assist her, but she was self-sufficient.

"Please sit in the middle," he requested, "and don't be frightened if it seems to tip. It probably won't."

Then, conscious that everybody on the beach was watching him, he deliberately took hold of the bow and waded in to his arm-pits before he expertly vaulted aboard and, snatching up a paddle, lifted the canoe up the long slope of the first comber. It started to curl just as they reached the crest and a little water came over the rails.

"Don't mind—we're all right now," he said, quickly. A little thrill ran through him; he had not used a canoe this way for several years now and had forgotten what glorious sport it was. "Like it?" he demanded.

She smiled, but a little doubtfully, and he noticed how her fingers gripped the gunwales. "I—I like it," she said, breathlessly. "But I—I hope you aren't going to tip."

Travers gave her a quick glance. "But you said you could swim——"

"I didn't say how much——"

A second comber was on its way. Travers concentrated his attention on it. As it passed, she emitted a little tremulous "O—oo—h!"

"How much can you swim?" he demanded.

"About twenty strokes. Then I—I have to stop for breath."

Travers set his lips, then relaxed them to remark: "In that case you had better sit just as still as you can."

The canoe was clear of the breakers, but it rose and plunged in a sea that, legacy of the off-shore storm, tossed even the great raft with its spring-board and chute.

"Were—were you ever out when it was so rough before?" Travers's companion asked.

Travers nodded. He had handled a canoe in worse seas than this.

"You—you do seem experienced," she remarked.

"Steady!" he commanded, shifting his weight to compensate hers. And added to reassure her, "I am experienced—a canoe is a poor man's yacht, you know."

She gave him a quick glance. "Oh—I never heard that."

She seemed to be considering it. "I can't imagine a poor man stopping at the inn," she broke out. "We've just come, and,

" 'You—it's a beautiful day,' he croaked. 'Did you think I hadn't noticed it?' she drawled."

though we thought prices were high, we're—well, simply aghast."

One might have accepted this as merely naive comment, but Travers did not. He suspected that, in the ingenuous, indirect fashion of her sex, she was fishing for information. She had assumed, obviously, that he was a guest at the inn. This had been a sort of credential. Now, pondering his remark about a poor man's yacht, she

was preparing to revise her estimate, if necessary. The thought stiffened him.

"I'm not stopping at the inn," he said, coolly.

Technically, as he assured himself, this was true. He had surrendered his key and paid his bill; he was simply waiting now for his train.

"You aren't?"

The surprise in her eyes was, he thought, rather too apparent. Here, indeed, was proof of his assertion that the modern girl was all of a piece, all with an eye to eligibility as the inevitable forerunner of romance.

"I'm just down for the day——" he began.

"But you said you had packed your bathing-suit," she interposed.

So he had. "I brought it along with me," he explained. He was thinking rapidly now, improvising as he went along. "Mr. Travers always urges me to. He is most kind that way——"

"Do you know Mr. Travers?" she demanded.

This was startling. "Why—some——"

"Tell me about him," she urged.

Here was a poser. "I—I don't know exactly what to say," he evaded, lamely.

"What does he look like?" she prompted.

"Please sit in the middle," he requested. She complied, but without removing her interested eyes from his face. "Er—he's medium height and very dark——" he commenced.

"Dark! Why, I'm positive Evelyn said he was light. Do you know Evelyn?"

"Yes—I mean—no—er—that is—not very well——"

"She was my room-mate at college," explained his inquisitor. "She told me that David—I'm so used to hearing her call him that that I always think of him that way—was here. And I'm simply mad to meet him."

Travers swallowed—visibly. But she seemed not to notice.

"He's so very funny!" she remarked.

"Funny?" In spite of himself Travers's tone was indignant.

"About girls," she explained, serenely. "Haven't you noticed it?"

"Why—he thinks the average girl isn't worth wasting any time on," said Travers, with great dignity. "He——"

"That's what he claims, but it's really stuff!" she interposed. "Evelyn says he's simply scared blue—or perhaps it's pink—when she as much as suggests that he should meet a girl."

"Meet a girl! Why, she's stuck every girl she ever knew——" He paused abruptly, conscious that he was speaking with more heat than his *rôle* called for.

"Oh—on to him?" she finished. "Oh, no, she didn't. She never stuck *me*. I admit she did try to get some of the girls at college interested in him. But she told me privately that he was a positive prig!"

"I don't think," observed Travers, austerely, "that that was quite the way to talk of—of her brother."

"I suppose not. But it *was* maddening. You see, a perfectly good brother is an asset if you can make him behave. You can swap him for other girls' brothers at dances and things like that——"

"Please sit in the middle," he advised, hastily.

She obeyed, without being even momentarily diverted from her topic.

"But he would never even come to a dance. Over and over again he'd promise to, but he'd always chuck it at the last moment. Evelyn would positively rant at such times—I wish you could have heard her."

Travers had—afterwards.

"And whenever Evelyn had one of us visiting her he always disappeared. We joked her about him—her vanishing brother, we called him."

"He's very busy——"

"Very *slippery*, Evelyn called him. I've always had a mad desire to see him."

Travers said nothing to that—the handling of the canoe apparently engrossed him and for a moment there was silence.

Then something seemed to amuse her, for she smiled reminiscently.

"One of the girls did see him once," she remarked. "She was visiting Evelyn and peeped over the banisters as he came in. He was just taking off his hat when they giggled out loud, and he gave one look at them and just slammed his hat on again and simply dived out of the front door."

The dimple at the corner of her mouth danced most deliciously—though that was not the adjective that occurred to Travers.

"Somebody asked her what he looked like," she went on, "and she said, 'A scared rabbit.' You don't mind my speaking of him so, do you?"

Travers cleared his throat. "Not at all," he assured her.

"I suppose I shouldn't speak so about your friend. Men are so much more loyal that way than women——"

"I'm—I'm not his friend," declared Travers. "I'm his—his tailor."

The effect of this on her was not lost on him.

"His—his tailor?" she gasped, wide-eyed.

Travers nodded.

"But you said you came down for the day to see him——"

"There was a suit he wanted specially,

and I brought it. He asked me to bring my bathing-suit and have a swim——"

"A suit he wanted specially," she repeated. "That sounds like business in the air—Evelyn will be interested." She glanced up at Travers. "But you said you knew Evelyn——"

"Very slightly," he declared. "She comes into the shop sometimes with him, when he's selecting suitings——"

"A man who brings his sister to his tailor's! Why, he ought to be in a museum of some kind."

"We've made several suits for her, too," Travers explained, hastily.

"Oh—I see," she said. An instant later she added, "Hadn't we better be returning?"

NOW that, thought Travers, with wholly unreasonable heat, was just what he had expected she would say. So long as she thought he was a friend of Travers, or even so long as she had believed he was stopping at the inn, with all that connoted, she had been willing to be unconventional. But the moment she had learned that he was only Travers's tailor she wanted to go ashore. So far as she was concerned, romance promptly withered.

"I think," she explained, "that the young man wants his canoe back."

Travers turned and glanced shoreward. There could be no question that the owner of the canoe missed it badly. Travers, however, was determined not to let her seize upon this as a pretext. Let the issue be defined!

"I'm in no hurry—are you?" he demanded, deliberately.

She surprised him. "Not particularly—but what are you going to say to him when you do go in?"

"Say? Oh, 'The woman tempted me'——"

"The idea!" she scoffed. "I didn't tell you that I was looking for romance and invite you——"

"You," said Travers, "are a standing invitation to romance."

It took her unawares, as he had intended it should. He expected she would say, "Sir!" or—freezingly—"Please take me ashore at once." And to him this would be proof that Travers's tailor was not to be permitted liberties for which Travers's friend might be forgiven.

What she actually said, however, was:—

"He's shouting something—can you hear him?"

"No—can you?"

"I can't—isn't it fortunate? Because, probably, he's saying that if we don't come in he'll go for the police."

It occurred to Travers that this was highly probable, but he had no intention of returning until she met the issue. As he had repeatedly assured Evelyn, he could do this sort of thing perfectly well if he wanted to. In the past he hadn't felt it necessary to demonstrate his natural abilities.

The girl spoke suddenly, under her breath—"Heavenly days!" it sounded like to him. She was staring shoreward; he swung about. The bereft youth had been joined by an older man who, making a trumpet of his hands, was calling to them.

Travers met her eyes. "Perhaps it's the chief of police wants me," he suggested.

She smiled, ruefully, he thought. "No—it's me he's calling."

"You?" Travers was puzzled.

"Yes. It's my—my husband," she explained. And added, sweetly, "Please, *please* sit in the middle."

"Your husband!" Travers repeated, as if he had never heard of such an institution as marriage.

Her eyes met his guilelessly. "Didn't you know?"

"Know? How should I?"

She twisted a narrow gold wedding-ring and a gorgeous solitaire which adorned one slender finger. "Men are so unobservant," she remarked. "A woman would have noticed at once."

Her eyes studied his face, which revealed his emotions, if not his thoughts. He was thinking that she certainly was unconventional and he wasn't rating that quality as highly as he had a little while back.

"Don't look so—perturbed," she begged. "You don't really mind, do you?"

"No," said Travers, and this was doubly untrue. "But *he* may."

"Oh, he will—fearfully," she assured him. "You see, he's so much older than I am and *terribly* tyrannical. And jealous, too. I think older men are apt to be, don't you?"

Travers had had no personal experience, but it was his impression this was so.

"That"—her teeth came together for an instant—"is why I came out with you. I had to do something to assert my independence. Besides, I'd begged him to take me out in a canoe, and he told me it couldn't be done with two people. And you said it could be—so I came."

It was evident that she thought this was a full and an adequate explanation. Travers had his doubts, however.

"What do you mean to tell him?" he asked, grimly.

"I haven't decided yet," she replied, serenely. "I always wait and then explain on the spur of the moment. That's my way.

And there's so many people on the beach that he—well, he can't be violent, can he ? "

Travers wasn't so sure of this.

" Hadn't we better go in ? " he asked.

" Perhaps you had," she agreed. " It isn't well to try him too far."

He turned the canoe with deft skill and started in. As they approached the point where the combers began he commenced paddling furiously, manœuvring for position.

" You—you aren't going to tip me ? " she said, quickly.

Travers glanced over his shoulder.

" Not if I can help it," he assured her.

" Perhaps it wouldn't be such a bad idea," she hazarded. " He'd be so awfully scared that he'd forget to scold——"

The onrushing comber seized the canoe and it hurtled shoreward, gripped in that irresistible surge. The water boiled along the gunwales and seethed about his paddle blade, but he would have managed perfectly if she hadn't moved.

" Keep——" he began, and then a solid mass of water silenced him.

He rose to the surface and shook the water from his eyes. She was already several feet away, swimming strongly towards the shore. She caught the surprise in his eyes and smiled mockingly. There was no doubt that she would take care of herself. He turned and considered the canoe.

" I'll have to get this ashore, somehow," he thought.

It was waterlogged, but the owner swam out and lent a hand. He did not seem angry ; indeed, he grinned cheerfully at Travers.

" Lose anything ? " he asked.

" My coat," retorted Travers. He might

" He would have managed perfectly if she hadn't moved. 'Keep ——'

have added, "And my faith in women"—he knew that she had deliberately capsized him and that she had been deceiving him all along about her ability as a swimmer. "But it's gone," he added, referring to the coat, "and if you'll take the other side of the canoe we'll put it ashore."

They achieved this, and when they had turned the water out of it—his companion and her husband had already disappeared—he surrendered it to its owner, offering belated apology.

"Pretty cheeky of me to take it," he began.

"Oh, that's all right," the youth retorted. "I thought you'd get a spill before you got in—you have to get the knack of it."

This Travers suffered in silence. Then he turned towards the inn. Many curious glances followed him, but for once he didn't care a hang. He'd change his clothes and catch the first train.

"Sent your bag up to your room," said the clerk at the desk, with a smile. "Thought you'd want it again. And there's a letter for you."

IT was from Evelyn. Travers ripped the envelope open.

"Dear Davy-Boy," he read,

'This is just a wee line to tell you—if you are *still* there—that Emily Ware, of whom I am quite sure you have heard me speak—is

he began, and then a solid mass of water silenced him."

going to be at the inn for a time. She has just returned from America with her brother Billy and her father——"

Travers paused—the clerk was speaking.

"Beg pardon!"

"I just suggested that you can just catch the train if you hurry," repeated the clerk.

"Er—thank you," said Travers, and moved on upstairs.

Nevertheless, he did not catch the train. He did not even change his clothes until he had finished Evelyn's letter.

"He—her father—had to leave America, as the climate there is too much for him. I happened to meet her in town, and when she told me she was looking for some seaside place I suggested the inn.

"Kiss her for me, when you see her."

The body of the letter made several things plain to him—one of them being that Emily had deliberately made a fool of him—and its conclusion made him blush. He assured himself, austerely, that he hoped he wouldn't encounter her again. Accordingly, when she did not appear for lunch he should have been happy. Nevertheless, he wasn't. He hovered about the lobby, oblivious for once of its many perils, but still fortune smiled upon him. She whom he preferred not to see remained invisible.

Eventually, however, Billy appeared. He, as Travers had already suspected, was one with authority on deep-sea canoeing.

"Say!" he announced. "I've just found out that it was you that Emily dabbed the mustard plaster on to at four o'clock this morning."

"What's that?" demanded the startled Travers.

"Your room is right under dad's," explained Billy. "That's how Emily got in wrong. Dad had a tummy-ache during the night—he has them every now and then—and Emily went down to the kitchen to make him a mustard poultice. She'd made arrangements to do that if he needed one, you see."

Billy's grin widened.

"The lifts weren't running, and instead of keeping on up to the fourth, where we are, she got switched off on to the third and landed in your room. Oh, Lord, I wish you could have seen her when she finally got to dad's room. She was absolutely petrified! She wanted to leave the first thing this morning, but we chaffed her out of it——"

"Does she know that it was me?" demanded Travers, hastily.

"Not yet. Just wait until I break the news to her——"

"I wouldn't tell her if I were you," Travers broke in.

"Why not?" demanded Billy.

"Why—it will embarrass her unnecessarily——"

"Serve her right. She embarrasses me whenever she gets a chance."

"But——" began Travers, weakly.

Billy had suddenly lost interest in him, however. A passing flapper had smiled brightly at him.

"See you later," he said, and departed in pursuit.

The clock which hung in the lobby suggested that if Travers were going to take the three-twenty he ought to be moving. Instead, however, he stood and glowered at Billy, now engaged in animated chatter with his seventeen-year-old—but very adept—charmer.

"Confound him," he mused. "I'd like to choke him."

Why, he did not explain, even to himself. And when, later, he had a chance to speak to Billy, his manner was mild—ingratiating almost.

"Your sister—is she all right?" he asked.

Billy looked puzzled. "Emily? Of course she's all right. Why shouldn't she be?"

"I thought perhaps the upset——"

"The poultice or the canoe?" demanded Billy, with a grin. "If you mean the canoe, a mere ducking wouldn't hurt Emily. She's strong as a horse. But the poultice is another thing. Just wait until she gets back and I point out her victim to her——"

"Has she gone somewhere?" interposed Travers.

Billy nodded. "She and dad are spending the afternoon with an old friend of dad's. I chucked it. When dad and old Whitney get to yapping about college days I——"

"Do you mean Whitney of Lyman and Whitney?" demanded Travers.

"I do. Do you know him?"

Travers did, though hardly well enough to call uninvited. As he strode along the road towards the Whitneys', devising an excuse for his intrusion, it did not occur to him that he was behaving in a most inexplicable and unprecedented manner. He had demonstrated all that Evelyn had demanded he should demonstrate, but instead of taking immediate advantage of his future immunity from pretty girls, he was in active pursuit of one, conscious only of a consuming desire to see her before Billy should, and so embarrass her with his discovery that she would probably flee the inn.

Somehow it did not occur to him that he might relieve her of this embarrassment by simply fulfilling his original intention and fleeing the inn himself.

"I'll just tell Whitney I heard so much about his place I couldn't resist the

temptation to drop in and see it," he assured himself.

EXPLANATIONS were not needed after all. The moment he turned into the Whitney drive he saw Emily. A pergola had been built on a little point overlooking the sea and there she stood, quite alone. He went to her, straight as the steel to the magnet. He startled her, but she recovered instantly.

"Oh," she said, "you are still here?" Then, very innocent of eye, she added, "Is Mr. Whitney a customer of yours, too?"

Travers stood before her, hat in hand.

"I've come," he blurted, "to tell you that that brother of yours has discovered who it was you—you put the poultice on——"

She crimsoned. "Oh," she gasped, "who—who was it?"

Travers swallowed hard. "It—it——" he stuttered, and stuck there.

She gave him a horrified glance.

"It—it wasn't you!" she exclaimed.

He nodded, and she dropped her eyes.

"I—I'm sorry," she murmured.

"I'm not," he declared, surprisingly—very surprisingly, considering the emotions he had experienced at the time.

She did not ask him why. She simply stood there, the prettiest picture of confusion one could imagine.

Travers took a simply prodigious breath. "Why did you tell me you were married?" he demanded, without preface.

She looked up at him. "Why did you tell me you were a tailor?" she retorted. Then, with the feminine lack of fairness that annoyed him in Evelyn, but somehow did not annoy him now, she managed to put him on the defensive. "Aren't you ashamed of yourself?"

"Aren't you?"

"No," she assured him, firmly. "You told the worst ones and you told them first. It was your bad example. Anyway," she added, illogically, "I don't see how you could be so silly as to believe that—that——"

"That you were married? But you wore a wedding ring——"

"On my right hand. I should think that that would have made you suspect it was my mother's."

It was quite apparent that she was without shame. But somehow he didn't care. There were other matters of more importance to be thrashed out.

"Did you know all the time who I was?" he asked.

She nodded. "And I flattered myself, for an instant, that you knew who I was."

"But I've never seen you," he protested.

"You must have—that time Evelyn and I peeped over the balustrade and giggled——"

Travers blushed. "*You* were the girl!"

"I was. And I had been invited especially to meet you. And you ran——"

"Like a scared rabbit?"

"Exactly. And it *wasn't* very complimentary."

"But I didn't know you then."

"No, and it was plain that you didn't want to, either." She glanced about and added, "I wonder what is keeping father and Mr. Whitney?"

"I don't know," said Travers. "But I hope it will keep them some time."

This she chose to ignore, and for an instant there was silence, broken only by the roar of the surf.

"You—you won't hold that other time against me, will you?" he ventured, hopefully, yet curiously agitated.

"It was humiliating—very," she said, sternly. "I made up my mind I'd get even with you some day——"

"You have—already," he broke in. "I——"

She gave him a glance in which were mingled apprehension and defiance.

"If you say a word about that—that poultice——" she warned.

"I didn't mean that at all," he assured her, hastily. "I meant that—that——"

There he halted. She looked at him inquiringly and then dropped her eyes. The interval that then elapsed could probably have been measured by seconds, but it seemed to him ages at least. Here, perhaps, was the time and place for him to pause and consider how sadly romance had degenerated. She had known all along who he was, and there was a question at least if she would have suffered him this long if he were a plumber or a coalheaver—or a tailor.

Nevertheless, he indulged in no such reflections. And if he had it wouldn't have made the slightest difference. The afternoon sun was glorious, the sea was beautiful, the world was a good place to live in, because she lived in it too.

On the inspiration of the moment he leaned a little towards her.

"B—*boo!*" said he.

And that is all, except that Evelyn assured him that Emily was the girl she had always intended him to marry.

OUR CONDUCTORS

By
ERNEST NEWMAN
Author of "Musical Studies," "A Musical Motley," etc.

THERE are not so many people now as there were fifty years ago who would maintain that the Briton, *qua* Briton, is not as musical as the Frenchman, the German, the Italian, the Russian, or indeed any foreigner.

During the nineteenth century, German music came to be regarded in most quarters as the best, on the whole, that the world has yet produced; but within the last fifty years or so we have seen wonderful efflorescences in French and Russian and English music, and to-day the man who holds that any one race is congenitally more gifted in music than any other race merely writes himself down as a very amateur ethnologist indeed. Where the nations differ is not in their innate capacity for music but in the opportunities they afford for the emergence of the superior musical types. I need not enter here upon a discussion of the peculiar social and economic factors that made musical development rapid in Germany and held it back so long in England. As regards the special subject of this article, the causes of our backwardness are patent enough. Whatever other factors may have been operative, one thing is certain—that you cannot develop a race of conductors until you have orchestras for them to conduct. There is only one way to learn conducting—by actually doing it. You cannot practise it in private, as you can the piano or the violin. Your instrument is the orchestra; and unless you are a millionaire you cannot afford an instrument of your own. The first-rate public orchestras in this country can still be counted on the fingers of one hand. It is evident, then, that if England were as rich in potential conductors as the hedges, at the moment I am writing, are in potential blackberries, not one per cent. of them would have the slightest chance of ever being heard of. In Germany a musician can serve an apprenticeship as second or third conductor in one of the many State or municipal opera houses. He learns the rudiments of the business as a conductor of rehearsals. From these he can proceed to the public conducting of the less exacting operas; and if he shows undeniable ability in these and in the larger works that will afterwards be given him to conduct, he stands a fair chance of becoming first conductor at some theatre or other. In England there was, until quite lately, hardly anywhere that a young man could learn the practical details of conducting. All the more reason have we to be thankful, then, that we have managed to evolve some four or five first-rate conductors of our own, and a fair number of others who, if not yet assured geniuses, are at any rate admirable and promising talents.

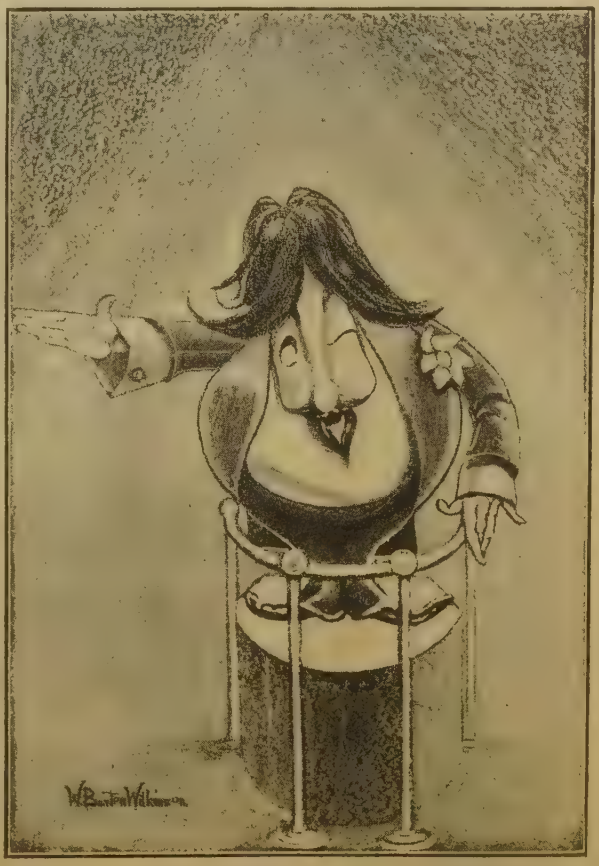
SIR HENRY WOOD.

TO Sir Henry Wood belongs the glory of having founded the race of English conductors. I do not mean that before he came we had no one in this country to conduct an orchestra; I have not forgotten Manns, Hallé (I am taking Hallé, for the moment, as an English musician), and others. But so far as I can make out (I am not old enough to have had a wide experience of these gentlemen) they were all respectable rather than brilliant—first-rate musicians, some of them, and men to whom this country owes a great deal, but not men obviously sent into the world by a foreseeing Providence to be conductors before everything else. We in this country really did not know much about conducting until quite recently. Hans Richter supplies a double proof of this statement. We know that when he first began to visit England he found our native orchestras seriously lacking in one or two important respects; we know also that he was solemnly censured by some of the critics of that day for conducting certain works

without a score—had the vulgar word 'swank" been in common use at that time the critics would have accused him of swanking. These two little facts show how remote we were then from the main currents of European music. But an even more smashing proof of how little the average Englishman knew about conducting was the average Englishman's acceptance of this same Hans Richter as the greatest of conductors—a legend that still survives in certain circles of Manchester and Birmingham. Richter was a thoroughly able man in his own sphere; but it was a narrow sphere. A few things he did superlatively well, but outside these he could not be trusted to get even near the inmost soul of the music. Even in the lighter works of his own country—the Mozart symphonies, for instance—he was, at his best, no more than second-rate. He became a legend in England because the ordinary Englishman had had experience of nothing better; and that was because the ordinary Englishman had experienced very little.

As I have said, with the coming of Sir Henry Wood we ceased to have any need to speak apologetically of the English product in comparison with the German. Wood learned his business in a hard school—conducting small opera companies, in which the very paucity of the orchestral material made incessant demands on the resources of the conductor. He never, as did some of his predecessors and contemporaries, gave the impression that here was just a good musician who had been intended by Nature to be a pianist, or composer, or conservatoire professor, but who, finding that the musical needs of the community called for a certain amount of conducting, genially undertook this as he would have done any other sort of musical work, and did his best at it. Wood, as it happened, was a fine pianist and accompanist, but these were only side lines with him; his real genius was for conducting. The orchestra, not the piano, was his instrument. Upon this instrument he learned to play as no Englishman had done before him, knowing every secret of its technique, and revelling in it as only those can do who have thoroughly mastered the technique of an art. He had temperament, individuality, and a stupendous capacity for work. As with all men who are predestined to grow, his individuality fed upon whatever it could assimilate in the styles of other conductors. His instinct led him, with perfect surety, away from conductors of the Richter type to those of the Nikisch type—those who try to give music the variety and flexibility of eloquent speech.

He had, of course, the defects of his qualities. The danger of specializing in any art is that you may be tempted to use your mastery of it to get results for their own sake, rather than for the sake of the art itself. There is a *prima donna* latent in every consummate artist; there is such a joy in doing the dazzling thing that he is inclined to forget that bedazzlement is not the final aim of art. The *prima donna* in Wood comes uppermost now and then. If we want to get him at his best, we go to hear him in some work that has not been staled for him by repetition. After all, it is not surprising if a great virtuoso of the orchestra plays occasional pranks with the classics. If he is to keep up his interest in a work for which he has lost a certain amount of his first awe through too long and too familiar intercourse with it, he must try to see something new in it. We may love



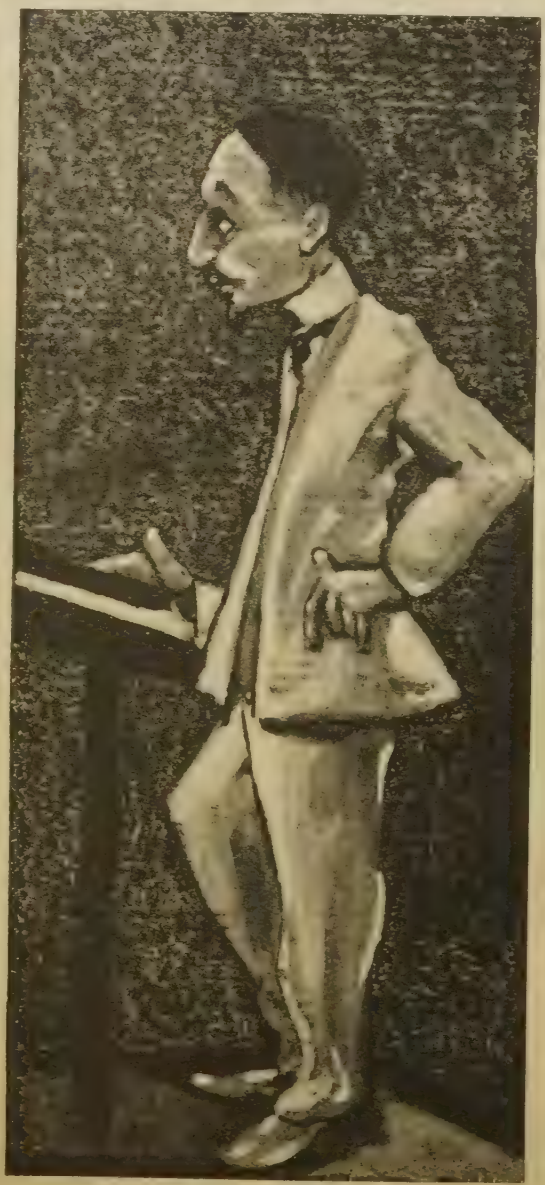
SIR HENRY WOOD.

grandmother very much, and in our first portrait or two of her, undertaken as they have been out of pure enthusiasm for the subject, find our full satisfaction in painting the dear old lady just as she is. But when it comes to *having* to paint grandmother, as a matter of duty, we begin to feel that, having long ago done justice to her face, our only salvation from boredom now is to do justice to ourself as an artist; and then we begin to use the beloved features as mere themes for an improvisation of our own, and if it strikes us that grandmother's nose or eyes could be improved by a change of line here or a touch of colour there we make the improvement (as we think it), and are afterwards quite surprised to hear that the picture is not accepted by the scandalized family as a veracious portrait. So it is with the conductors who add something to Beethoven, or Brahms, or Tchaikovsky, that the composer himself never dreamed of. Wood came to indulge rather liberally in these improvisations in his conducting of the classics; and then those of us who were wise preferred to listen to him in the less hackneyed works, where he has neither the temptation nor the opportunity to indulge in any hanky-panky, and we get the full benefit of his splendid musicianship, his technical command of his material, and his infectious joy in the sheer business of doing his job.

SIR THOMAS BEECHAM.

SIR THOMAS BEECHAM had the supreme misfortune to be born rich; the result is that quite a number of people who ought to know better still persist in regarding him simply as a well-to-do amateur who took up music instead of, say, yachting or big-game shooting.

A more ludicrous mistake was never made in connection with any artist. Beecham has worked harder at his profession than ninety-nine out of a hundred men whose profession is their livelihood would care to do. He was unusually lucky in escaping, as a child and young man, musical education of the ordinary sort. His father had a huge mechanical organ—it must have been a rarity in those days—that played orchestral music with more or less accurate orchestral effects; so that the boy grew up familiar from childhood with music as a thing not only of form but of colour, besides, of course, the advantage of getting his first impressions of music as of a living art, not the dead art of the class-room. Like all really musical people, he needed practically no teaching. He was, from an early age, able to travel all over Europe, to hear the best music and the best performers of every country, and, which was of the utmost importance in his education as an artist, to associate with some of the greatest of European singers and be admitted to the secrets of their workroom. It is largely due to this early training in music as an art of singing that he owes the faculty in which he is pre-eminent among English conductors—that of making the orchestra a *singing* voice. It was the defect of Richter that under him the orchestra never sang.



SIR THOMAS BEECHAM.

The secret of the finest singing is, at bottom, that of ordinary speech—an endless variety of rhythm. Time must be kept; but time should be a support, not a fetter. When we talk, we go faster or slower, or we stress this syllable or that, or tighten or slacken the mental tension, according to the fluctuations of the feeling. That is what a fine singer does with the phrases of his song; and that is what a Pachmann does with Chopin, or a Nikisch or a Beecham with an orchestra. I was amused and amazed, one night at Covent Garden, to be told by a friend that Beecham had no sense of rhythm. I can only suppose that my friend's sense of rhythm demanded for its satisfaction the regular, unmistakable plunk-plunking pulse of the "beats" of a bar; and he thought Beecham unrhythmical in comparison with Richter, as he would think Pachmann unrhythmical in comparison with Miss Jones of the Conservatoire, because this pulse was not crudely, metronomically perceptible all the time. The metre of the metronomic player is like a starved cab-horse with every bone showing through the skin; the rhythm of the "singing" player is like the gloriously fit thoroughbred—the bones are there to give support to the elastic, rippling muscles and the velvet skin, but they do not show through.

MR. LANDON RONALD.

Beecham, like every man of high-strung genius, pays the penalty for his intenser sensitiveness by a slight restriction of the sphere of his sensitiveness. He is not equally responsive to every kind of music, though there has been a notable growth in his receptivity during the last few years. As, however, there never was, and probably never will be, a performer in any sphere who was equally good in every genre, he need not greatly worry over this little and quite common human frailty. He is brilliant, and brilliance has generally to be purchased at the cost of breadth. He has the great gift—a priceless gift for the artist—of economizing his nervous force in the ordinary affairs of life in order that he may have the more of it to burn up in his art. He is the most electrical of English conductors; sheet-lightning seems to play through the hall or the theatre with the first few strokes of his baton—for he has the art of calling the full voltage of his temperament into play at a moment's notice, what the older actors used to call the art of striking twelve at once. Like Nikisch, he seems to influence his men by some psychological force that eludes pursuit and baffles analysis; it is this uncanny quality that has carried him triumphantly through performances of difficult works in which, owing to inferior material and insufficient preparation, the chances always are a thousand to one in favour of a breakdown in the next bar. And if his belief in his luck makes him a shade too ready to gamble—well, it must be admitted that he generally wins.

MR. LANDON RONALD.

MR. LANDON RONALD, on the other hand, never gambles—at least, not if he can help it. He is one of those generals who prefer to go into battle

with the feeling that every possible precaution has been taken and that they cannot help winning. He has attained an extraordinary poise in his conducting—not the tense poise, as we may call it, of a Beecham, the *bravura* that positively rejoices in danger because of the belief that your star will see you through, the feeling that possesses the motorist of genius at times, and still more often the airman, but a sort of reasoned poise, the poise of the great rifle-shot or billiard-player, the product of the conviction that you know all the forces against you and also know yourself, and can trust yourself to dominate the forces. This is Ronald's *daemon*, and it has, if not precisely the same effect on an orchestra as the *daemon* of Beecham, at all events an effect as great in its own way. Orchestral players will tell you of their feeling of perfect safety under Ronald. He wastes neither himself nor them, his technique is so perfect that it can afford to be undemonstrative, and the players are not worried by the receipt of messages that, by their own excess of eagerness, call out a corresponding wasteful excess of energy in them; everything runs with the smooth ease of a perfect machine. It is only by the strictest self-discipline, and a total absence of the false pride that refuses to learn, that Ronald has made of himself the conductor of genius that he is. In his younger days he was inclined now and then to be showy; I used to fancy I saw more than one resemblance between him and the Disraeli of the younger years. But steadily the artist in him got the upper hand of the showman. All the while that he was dazzling his audiences with his brilliant performances of the smaller works in which the charm is mainly external—such as the "Casse-Noisette" Suite—he was quietly and determinedly burrowing his way into the confidence of the greater music, the secret of which lies wholly inward. The result is that the conductor whom the unthinking of ten years or so ago looked upon as a mere clever rider of musical circus-horses, a mere musical hoop-jumper, has developed into the finest interpreter we have of Elgar's music—and there is no music more thoughtful, more refined, more ethical, in the sense in which we apply the term to the finest English poetry, than this.

MR. ALBERT COATES.

MR. ALBERT COATES.

MR. ALBERT COATES is a comparative new-comer among us, but he has quickly made a great reputation for himself; indeed, his success has been so rapid that he is already a bit of a legend, and we know that, in art, the legends do not always correspond with the facts. His public sometimes shows itself to be rather undiscriminating; and the test of his real greatness will be his ability to estimate each and every expression of that public's approval at its true value. Frankly, he is in grave danger of being spoiled, of being confirmed in his defects as well as in his qualities—of taking, indeed, his defects for qualities. His salvation depends upon the extent of his faculty for self-criticism. He has been overlavishly praised, both in the concert-room and in certain sections of the Press; he might well be forgiven if he took too seriously the implication that, until he came to us from Russia, we poor islanders had never known what it was to have a musician of genius of our own.

How the extent of his vogue is to be accounted for I do not know; it is one of those things, like the vogue of a Heifetz or a Tetrazzini, that no musician can understand. By this I do not mean that Coates is no better than these people. It stands to reason that the man who can make the marvellous effect he does with the third and fourth symphonies of Scriabine is on a different plane from any star pianist, fiddler, or singer. I simply mean that, in the present temper of the Queen's Hall audiences, Coates often gets more applause for a quite ordinary piece of work than any other conductor would for a brilliant piece of work; he can even excite his audience to a frenzy of rapture with a performance — say, of Beethoven — that can only make the judicious grieve. We get the impression that he can do nothing wrong. But there was never an effect without a cause; and there must be some explanation of this good luck of Coates's. Perhaps part of the secret resides in his stalwart form, which is obviously not without its effect on the female portion of the audience—and the female portion of any musical audience, as we all know, is invariably the larger. He is an extremely able musician, and he has had a thorough training and a rich experience in Germany and Russia. Personally I admire him most in Scriabine: I never hope to be lifted to more radiant heights of spirituality than he can lift us in "Le Poème de l'Extase" and "Le Divin Poème," and here and there in "Prometheus." He has only to get an infusion of that spirituality into his other music to be one of the greatest conductors of our time.

MR. HAMILTON HARTY.

MR. HAMILTON HARTY.

THERE are several other English conductors of whom I should like to speak at length, but space forbids. Mr. Hamilton Harty, after attracting notice at sporadic concerts, has now become conductor of the Hallé concerts, where, we may be sure, he will make his mark. He has not done enough conducting to have burnt up any of himself, or to have become weary of any composer or phase.

Like the rest of us, he has his preferences, and I fancy his lie in the direction of the music that stands up bravely to life rather than that of the music that folds its hands and broods upon life, however beautifully. A performance of his of Strauss's "Don Juan" in London a few months ago had more of the ungovernable fire of youth running through it than any other performance of the work that I have heard. Under his direction the Hallé concerts are not likely to go to sleep; and Manchester, perhaps more than any large town in England, needs awakening to the newer impulses in orchestral music.

I began by saying that it is useless to expect genius to emerge unless the conditions exist that make emergence possible. Sir Thomas Beecham has given their opportunities to three of the ablest of our younger conductors—Mr. Eugène Goossens, Mr. Julius Harrison, and Mr. Clarence Raybould. At Birmingham, Mr. Appleby Matthews has done work that justifies us in building high hopes upon him. And there is Mr. Adrian Boult, who has already shown himself so thoroughly capable as to deserve much better treatment than this mere mention in a final paragraph.

If you haven't met Archie—meet him in this story.

"Mother's Knee"

By

P. G. WODEHOUSE

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A. WALLIS MILLS

ARCHIE MOFFAM'S connection with that devastatingly popular ballad, "Mother's Knee," was one to which he always looked back later with a certain pride. "Mother's Knee," it will be remembered, went through the world like a pestilence. Scots elders hummed it on their way to kirk; cannibals crooned it to their offspring in the jungles of Borneo; it was a best-seller among the Bolshevists. In the United States alone three million copies were disposed of. For a man who has not accomplished anything outstandingly great in his life, it is something to have been in a sense responsible for a song like that; and, though there were moments when Archie experienced some of the emotions of a man who has punched a hole in the dam of one of the larger reservoirs, he never really regretted his share in the launching of the thing.

It seems almost bizarre now to think that there was a time when even one person in the world had not heard "Mother's Knee"; but it came fresh to Archie one afternoon in his suite at the Hotel Cosmopolis, where he was cementing with cigarettes and pleasant conversation his renewed friendship with Wilson Hymack, whom he had first met in the neighbourhood of Armentières during the war.

"What are you doing these days?" inquired Wilson Hymack.

"Me?" said Archie. "Well, as a matter of fact, there is what you might call a sort or species of lull in my activities at the moment. But my jolly old father-in-law is bustling about, running up a new hotel a bit farther down-town, and the scheme is for me to be manager when it's finished. From what I have seen in this place, it's a simple sort of job, and I fancy I shall be somewhat hot stuff. How are you filling in the long hours?"

"I'm in my uncle's office, darn it!"

"Starting at the bottom and learning the business and all that? A noble pursuit, no doubt, but I'm bound to say it would give me the pip in no uncertain manner."

"It gives me," said Wilson Hymack, "a pain in the gizzard. I want to be a composer."

"A composer, eh?"

Archie felt that he should have guessed this. The chappie had a distinctly artistic look. He wore a bow-tie and all that sort of thing. His trousers bagged at the knees, and his hair, which during the martial epoch of his career had been pruned to the roots, fell about his ears in luxuriant disarray.

"Say! Do you want to hear the best thing I've ever done?"

"Indubitably," said Archie, politely. "Carry on, old bird!"

"I wrote the lyric as well as the melody," said Wilson Hymack, who had already seated himself at the piano. "It's got the greatest title you ever heard. It's a lallapaloosa! It's called 'It's a Long Way Back to Mother's Knee.' How's that? Poor, eh?"

Archie expelled a smoke-ring doubtfully.

"Isn't it a little stale?"

"Stale? What do you mean, stale?

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There's always room for another song boosting mother."

"Oh, is it boosting mother?" Archie's face cleared. "I thought it was a hit at the short skirts. Why, of course, that makes all the difference. In that case, I see no reason why it should not be ripe, fruity, and pretty well all to the mustard. Let's have it."

Wilson Hymack pushed as much of his hair out of his eyes as he could reach with one hand, cleared his throat, looked dreamily over the top of the piano at a photograph of Archie's father-in-law, Mr. Daniel Brewster, played a prelude, and began to sing in a weak, high, composer's voice. All composers sing exactly alike, and they have to be heard to be believed.

"One night a young man wandered through the glitter of Broadway:
His money he had squandered. For a meal he couldn't pay."

"Tough luck!" murmured Archie, sympathetically.

"He thought about the village where his boyhood he had spent,
And yearned for all the simple joys with which he'd been content."

"The right spirit!" said Archie, with approval. "I'm beginning to like this chappie!"

"Don't interrupt!"

"Oh, right-o! Carried away and all that!"

"He looked upon the city, so frivolous and gay:
And, as he heaved a weary sigh, these words he then did say:—

"Wilson Hymack's voice cracked on the final high note."

It's a long way back to mother's knee,
mother's knee,
mother's knee :
It's a long way back to mother's knee,
Where I used to stand and prattle
With my teddy-bear and rattle :
Oh, those childhood days in Tennessee,
They sure look good to me !
It's a long, long way, but I'm gonna start to-day!
I'm going back,
Believe me, oh !
I'm going back
(I want to go !)
I'm going back—back—on the seven-three
To the dear old shack where I usea to be !
I'm going back to mother's knee ! "

Wilson Hymack's voice cracked on the final high note, which was of an altitude beyond his powers. He turned with a modest cough.

"That'll give you an idea of it ! "

"It has, old thing, it has ! "

"Is it or is it not a ball of fire ? "

"It has many of the earmarks of a sound egg," admitted Archie. "Of course——"

"Of course, it wants singing."

"Just what I was going to suggest."

"It wants a woman to sing it. A woman who could reach out for that last high note and teach it to take a joke. The whole refrain is working up to that. You need Tetrazzini or someone who would just pick that note off the roof and hold it till the janitor came round to lock up the building for the night."

"I must buy a copy for my wife. Where can I get it ? "

"You can't get it ! It isn't published. Writing music's the darndest job ! " Wilson Hymack snorted fiercely. It was plain that the man was pouring out the pent-up emotion of many days. "You write the biggest thing in years and you go round trying to get someone to sing it, and they say you're a genius and then shove the song away in a drawer and forget about it."

Archie lit another cigarette.

"I'm a jolly old child in these matters, old lad," he said, "but why don't you take it direct to a publisher ? As a matter of fact, if it would be any use to you, I was forgathering with a music-publisher only the other day. A bird of the name of Blumenthal. He was lunching in here with a pal of mine, and we got tolerably matey. Why not let me tool you round to the office to-morrow and play it to him ? "

"No, thanks. Much obliged, but I'm not going to play that melody in any publisher's office with his hired gang of Tin-Pan Alley composers listening at the keyhole and taking notes. I'll have to wait till I can find somebody to sing it. Well, I must be going along. Glad to have seen you again. Sooner or later I'll take you to hear that high note sung by someone in a way that'll make your spine tie itself in knots round the back of your neck."

"I'll count the days," said Archie, courteously. "Pip-pip ! "

HARDLY had the door closed behind the composer when it opened again to admit Lucille.

"Hallo, light of my soul ! " said Archie, rising and embracing his wife. "Where have you been all the afternoon ? I was expecting you this many an hour past. I wanted you to meet—— "

"I've been having tea with a girl down in Greenwich Village. I couldn't get away before. Who was that who went out just as I came along the passage ? "

"Chappie of the name of Hymack. I met him in France. A composer and what not."

"We seem to have been moving in artistic circles this afternoon. The girl I went to see is a singer. At least, she wants to sing, but gets no encouragement."

"Precisely the same with my bird. He wants to get his music sung but nobody'll sing it. But I didn't know you knew any Greenwich Village warblers, sunshine of my home. How did you meet this female ? "

Lucille sat down and gazed forlornly at him with her big grey eyes. She was registering something, but Archie could not gather what it was.

"Archie, darling, when you married me you undertook to share my sorrows, didn't you ? "

"Absolutely ! It's all in the book of words. For better or for worse, in sickness and in health, all-down-set-'em-up-in-the-other-alley. Regular iron-clad contract ! "

"Then share 'em ! " said Lucille. "Bill's in love again ! "

Archie blinked.

"Bill ? When you say Bill, do you mean Bill ? Your brother Bill ? My brother-in-law Bill ? Jolly old William, the son and heir of the Brewsters ? "

"I do."

"You say he's in love ? Cupid's dart ? "

"Even so ! "

"But, I say ! Isn't this rather—— What I mean to say is, the lad's an absolute scourge ! The Great Lover, what ! Also ran, Brigham Young, and all that sort of thing ! Why, it's only a few weeks ago that he was moaning brokenly about that vermilion-haired female who subsequently hooked on to old Reggie Van Tuyl ! "

"She's a little better than that girl, thank goodness. All the same, I don't think father will approve."

"Of what calibre is the latest exhibit ? "

"Well, she comes from the Middle West, and seems to be trying to be twice as Bohemian as the rest of the girls down in Greenwich Village. She wears her hair bobbed and goes about in a kimono. She's probably read magazine stories about Greenwich Village, and has

"Snake Bite? What rummy names you have in America! Still, I'll admit there's a village in England called Nether Wallop, so who am I to cast the first stone? How is old Bill? Pretty feverish?"

"He says this time it is the real thing."

"That's what they all say! I wish I had a dollar for every time—— Forgotten what I was going to say!" broke off Archie, prudently. "So you think," he went on, after a pause, "that William's latest is going to be one more shock for the old dad?"

"I can't imagine father approving of her."

"I've studied your merry old progenitor pretty closely," said Archie, "and, between you and me, I can't imagine him approving of anybody!"

"I can't understand why it is that Bill goes out of his way to pick these horrors. I know at least twenty delightful girls, all

"'Don't fight, you two children!' intervened Lucille, firmly."

modelled herself on them. It's so silly, when you can see Hicks Corners sticking out of her all the time."

"That one got past me before I could grab it. What did you say she had sticking out of her?"

"I meant that anybody could see that she came from somewhere out in the wilds. As a matter of fact, Bill tells me that she was brought up in Snake Bite, Michigan."

pretty and with lots of money, who would be just the thing for him; but he sneaks away and goes falling in love with someone impossible. And the worst of it is that one always feels one's got to do one's best to see him through."

"Absolutely! One doesn't want to throw a spanner into the works of Love's young dream. It behoves us to rally round. Have you heard this girl sing?"

"Yes. She sang this afternoon."

"What sort of a voice has she got?"

"Well, it's—loud!"

"Could she pick a high note off the roof and hold it till the janitor came round to lock up the building for the night?"

"What on earth do you mean?"

"Answer me this, woman, frankly. How is her high note? Pretty lofty?"

"Why, yes."

"Then say no more," said Archie. "Leave this to me, my dear old better four-fifths! Hand the whole thing over to Archibald, the man who never lets you down. I have a scheme!"

AS Archie approached his suite on the following afternoon he heard through the closed door the drone of a gruff male voice; and, going in, discovered Lucille in the company of his brother-in-law. Lucille, Archie thought, was looking a trifle fatigued. Bill, on the other hand, was in great shape. His eyes were shining, and his face looked so like that of a stuffed frog that Archie had no difficulty in gathering that he had been lecturing on the subject of his latest enslaver.

"Hallo, Bill, old crumpet!" he said.

"Hallo, Archie!"

"I'm so glad you've come," said Lucille. "Bill is telling me all about Spectatia."

"Who?"

"Spectatia. The girl, you know. Her name is Spectatia Huskisson."

"It can't be!" said Archie, incredulously.

"Why not?" growled Bill.

"Well, how could it?" said Archie, appealing to him as a reasonable man. "I mean to say! Spectatia Huskisson! I gravely doubt whether there is such a name."

"What's wrong with it?" demanded the incensed Bill. "It's a darned sight better name than Archibald Moffam."

"Don't fight, you two children!" intervened Lucille, firmly. "It's a good old Middle West name. Everybody knows the Huskissons of Snake Bite, Michigan. Besides, Bill calls her Tootles."

"Pootles," corrected Bill, austerely.

"Oh, yes, Pootles. He calls her Pootles."

"Young blood! Young blood!" sighed Archie.

"I wish you wouldn't talk as if you were my grandfather."

"I look on you as a son, laddie, a favourite son!"

"If I had a father like you——!"

"Ah, but you haven't, young-feller-me-lad, and that's the trouble. If you had, everything would be simple. But as your actual father, if you'll allow me to say so, is one of the finest specimens of man-eating fish in captivity, something has got to be done about it, and you're dashed lucky to have me in your corner, a guide, philosopher, and friend, full of the fruitiest ideas. Now, if you'll kindly listen to me for a moment——"

"I've been listening to you ever since you came in."

"You wouldn't speak in that harsh tone of voice if you knew all! William, I have a scheme!"

"Well?"

"The scheme to which I allude is what Maeterlinck would call a lallapaloosa!"

"What a little marvel he is!" said Lucille, regarding her husband affectionately. "He eats a lot of fish, Bill. That's what makes him so clever!"

"Shrimps!" diagnosed Bill, churlishly.

"Do you know the leader of the orchestra in the restaurant downstairs?" asked Archie, ignoring the slur.

"I know there *is* a leader of the orchestra. What about him?"

"A sound fellow. Great pal of mine. I've forgotten his name——"

"Call him Pootles!" suggested Lucille.

"Desist!" said Archie, as a wordless growl proceeded from his stricken brother-in-law. "This girlish frivolity is unseemly. Well, I'm going to have a chat with this chappie and fix it all up."

"Fix what up?"

"The whole jolly business. I'm going to kill two birds with one stone. I've a composer chappie popping about in the background whose one ambish. is to have his pet song sung before a discriminating audience. You have a singer straining at the leash. I'm going to arrange with this egg who leads the orchestra that your female shall sing my chappie's song downstairs one night during dinner. How about it? Is it or is it not a ball of fire?"

"It's not a bad idea," admitted Bill, brightening visibly. "I wouldn't have thought you had it in you."

"Why not?"

"Well——"

"It's a capital idea," said Lucille. "Quite out of the question, of course."

"How do you mean?"

"Don't you know that the one thing father hates more than anything else in the world is anything like a cabaret? People are always coming to him, suggesting that it would brighten up the dinner hour if he had singers and things, and he crushes them into little bits. He thinks there's nothing that lowers the tone of a place more. He'll bite you in three places when you suggest it to him!"

"Ah! But has it escaped your notice, lighting system of my soul, that the dear

old dad is not at present in residence? He went off to fish at Lake What's-its-name this morning."

"You aren't dreaming of doing this without asking him?"

"That was the general idea."

"But he'll be furious when he finds out."

"But will he find out? I ask you, will he?"

"Of course he will."

"I don't see why he should," said Bill, on whose plastic mind the plan had made a deep impression.

"He won't," said Archie, confidently. "This wheeze is for one night only. By the time the jolly old guv'nor returns, bitten to the bone by mosquitoes, with one small stuffed trout in his suit-case, everything will be over and all quiet once more along the Potomac. The scheme is this. My chappie wants his song heard by a publisher. Your girl wants her voice heard by one of the blighters who get up concerts and all that sort of thing. No doubt you know such a bird, whom you could invite to the hotel for a bit of dinner?"

"I know Carl Steinburg. As a matter of fact, I was thinking of writing to him about Spectatia."

"You're absolutely sure that *is* her name?" said Archie, his voice still tinged with incredulity. "Oh, well, I suppose she told you so herself, and no doubt she knows best. That will be topping. Rope in your pal and hold him down at the table till the finish. Lucille, the beautiful vision on the sky-line yonder, and I will be at another table entertaining Maxie Blumenthal."

"Who on earth is Maxie Blumenthal?" asked Lucille.

"One of my boyhood chums. A music-publisher. I'll get him to come along, and then we'll all be set. At the conclusion of the performance Miss——"—Archie winced—"Miss Spectatia Huskisson will be signed up for a forty weeks' tour, and jovial old Blumenthal will be making all arrangements for publishing the song. Two birds, as I indicated before, with one stone! How about it?"

"It's a winner," said Bill.

"Of course," said Archie, "I'm not urging you. I merely make the suggestion. If you know a better 'ole, go to it!"

"It's terrific!" said Bill.

"It's absurd!" said Lucille.

"My dear old partner of joys and sorrows," said Archie, wounded, "we court criticism, but this is mere abuse. What seems to be the difficulty?"

"The leader of the orchestra would be afraid to do it."

"Ten dollars—supplied by William here—push it over, Bill, old man—will remove his tremors."

"And father's certain to find out."

"Am I afraid of father?" cried Archie, manfully. "Well, yes, I am!" he added, after a moment's reflection. "But I don't see how he can possibly get to know."

"Of course he can't," said Bill, decidedly. "Fix it up as soon as you can, Archie. This is what the doctor ordered."

THE main dining-room of the Hotel Cosmopolis is a decorous place. The lighting is artistically dim, and the genuine old tapestries on the walls seem, with their mediæval calm, to discourage any essay in the riotous. Soft-footed waiters shimmer to and fro over thick, expensive carpets to the music of an orchestra which abstains wholly from the noisy modernity of jazz. To Archie, who during the past few days had been privileged to hear Miss Huskisson rehearsing, the place had a sort of brooding quiet, like the ocean just before the arrival of a cyclone. As Lucille had said, Miss Huskisson's voice was loud. It was a powerful organ, and there was no doubt that it would take the cloistered stillness of the Cosmopolis dining-room and stand it on one ear. Almost unconsciously, Archie found himself bracing his muscles and holding his breath as he had done in France at the approach of the zero hour, when awaiting the first roar of a barrage. He listened mechanically to the conversation of Mr. Blumenthal.

The music-publisher was talking with some vehemence on the subject of Labour. A recent printers' strike had bitten deeply into Mr. Blumenthal's soul. The working man, he considered, was rapidly landing God's Country in the soup, and he had twice upset his glass with the vehemence of his gesticulation. He was an energetic right-and-left-hand talker.

"The more you give 'em the more they want!" he complained. "There's no pleasing 'em! It isn't only in my business. There's your father, Mrs. Moffam!"

"Good God! Where?" said Archie, starting.

"I say, take your father's case. He's doing all he knows to get this new hotel of his finished, and what happens? A man gets fired for loafing on his job, and Connolly calls a strike. And the building operations are held up till the thing's settled! It isn't right!"

"It's a great shame," agreed Lucille. "I was reading about it in the paper this morning."

"That man Connolly's a tough guy. You'd think, being a personal friend of your father, he would——"

"I didn't know they were friends."

" Been friends for years. But a lot of difference that makes. Out come the men just the same. It isn't right ! I was saying it wasn't right ! " repeated Mr. Blumenthal to Archie, for he was a man who liked the attention of every member of his audience.

Archie did not reply. He was staring glassily across the room at two men who had just come in. One was a large, stout, square-faced man of commanding personality. The other was Mr. Daniel Brewster.

Mr. Blumenthal followed his gaze.

" Why, there is Connolly coming in now ! "

" Father ! " gasped Lucille.

Her eyes met Archie's. Archie took a hasty drink of ice-water.

" This," he murmured, " has torn it ! "

" Archie, you must do something ! "

" I know ! But what ? "

" What's the trouble ? " inquired Mr. Blumenthal, mystified.

" Go over to their table and talk to them." said Lucille.

" Me ! " Archie quivered. " No, I say, old thing, really ! "

" Get them away ! "

" How do you mean ? "

" I know ! " cried Lucille, inspired. " Father promised that you should be manager of the new hotel when it was built. Well, then, this strike affects you just as much as anybody else. You have a perfect right to talk it over with them. Go and ask them to have dinner up in our suite where you can discuss it quietly. Say that up there they won't be disturbed by the—the music."

" The Labour leader's eye, which collided with Archie's as the latter pulled up a chair and sat down at the table, was hard and frosty."

At this moment, while Archie wavered, hesitating like a diver on the edge of a spring-board who is trying to summon up the necessary nerve to project himself into the deep, a bell-boy approached the table where the Messrs. Brewster and Connolly had seated themselves. He murmured something in Mr. Brewster's ear, and the proprietor of the Cosmopolis rose and followed him out of the room.

"Quick! Now's your chance!" said Lucille, eagerly. "Father's been called to the telephone. Hurry!"

Archie took another drink of ice-water to steady his shaking nerve-centres, pulled down his waistcoat, straightened his tie, and then, with something of the air of a Roman gladiator entering the arena, tottered across the room. Lucille turned to entertain the perplexed music-publisher.

The nearer Archie got to Mr. Aloysius Connolly the less did he like the looks of him. Even at a distance the Labour leader had had a formidable aspect. Seen close to, he looked even more uninviting. His face had the appearance of having been carved out of granite, and the eye which collided with Archie's as the latter, with an attempt at an ingratiating smile, pulled up a chair and sat down at the table was hard and frosty. Mr. Connolly gave the impression that he would be a good man to have on your side during a rough-and-tumble fight down on the water-front or in some lumber-camp, but he did not look chummy.

"Hallo-allo-allo!" said Archie.

"Who the devil," inquired Mr. Connolly, "are you?"

"My name's Archibald Moffam."

"That's not my fault."

"I'm jolly old Brewster's son-in-law."

"Glad to meet you."

"Glad to meet *you*," said Archie, handsomely.

"Well, good-bye!" said Mr. Connolly.

"Eh?"

"Run along and sell your papers. Your father-in-law and I have business to discuss."

"Yes, I know."

"Private," added Mr. Connolly.

"Oh, but I'm in on this binge, you know. I'm going to be the manager of the new hotel."

"You!"

"Absolutely!"

"Well, well!" said Mr. Connolly, non-committially.

Archie, pleased with the smoothness with which matters had opened, bent forward winsomely.

"I say, you know! It won't do, you know! Absolutely no! Not a bit like it! No, no, far from it! Well, how about it? How do we go? What? Yes? No?"

"What on earth are you talking about?"

"Call it off, old thing!"

"Call what off?"

"This festive old strike."

"Not on your—hallo, Dan! Back again?"

MR. BREWSTER, looming over the table like a thundercloud, regarded Archie with more than his customary hostility. Life was no pleasant thing for the proprietor of the Cosmopolis just now. Once a man starts building hotels, the thing becomes like dram-drinking. Any hitch, any sudden cutting-off of the daily dose, has the worst effects; and the strike which was holding up the construction of his latest effort had plunged Mr. Brewster into a restless gloom. In addition to having this strike on his hands, he had had to abandon his annual fishing-trip just when he had begun to enjoy it; and, as if all this were not enough, here was his son-in-law sitting at his table. Mr. Brewster had a feeling that this was more than man was meant to bear.

"What do you want?" he demanded.

"Hallo, old thing!" said Archie. "Come and join the party!"

"Don't call me old thing!"

"Right-o, old companion, just as you say. I say, I was just going to suggest to Mr. Connolly that we should all go up to my suite and talk this business over quietly."

"He says he's the manager of your new hotel," said Mr. Connolly. "Is that right?"

"I suppose so," said Mr. Brewster, gloomily.

"Then I'm doing you a kindness," said Mr. Connolly, "in not letting it be built."

Archie dabbed at his forehead with his handkerchief. The moments were flying, and it began to seem impossible to shift these two men. Mr. Connolly was as firmly settled in his chair as some primeval rock. As for Mr. Brewster, he, too, had seated himself, and was gazing at Archie with a weary repulsion. Mr. Brewster's glance always made Archie feel as though there were soup on his shirt-front.

And suddenly from the orchestra at the other end of the room there came a familiar sound, the prelude of "Mother's Knee."

"So you've started a cabaret, Dan?" said Mr. Connolly, in a satisfied voice. "I always told you you were away behind the times here!"

Mr. Brewster jumped.

"Cabaret!"

He stared unbelievingly at the white-robed figure which had just mounted the orchestra dais, and then concentrated his gaze on Archie.

Archie would not have looked at his father-in-law at this juncture if he had had a free and untrammelled choice; but Mr. Brewster's

eye drew his with something of the fascination which a snake's has for a rabbit. Mr. Brewster's eye was fiery and intimidating. A basilisk might have gone to him with advantage for a course of lessons. His gaze went right through Archie till the latter seemed to feel his back-hair curling crisply in the flames.

"Is this one of your fool-tricks?"

Even in this tense moment Archie found time almost unconsciously to admire his father-in-law's penetration and intuition. He seemed to have a sort of sixth sense. No doubt this was how great fortunes were made.

"Well, as a matter of fact—to be absolutely accurate—it was like this——"

"Say, cut it out!" said Mr. Connolly. "Can the chatter! I want to listen."

Archie was only too ready to oblige him. Conversation at the moment was the last thing he himself desired. He managed with a strong effort to disengage himself from Mr. Brewster's eye, and turned to the orchestra dais, where Miss Spectatia Huskisson was now beginning the first verse of Wilson Hymack's masterpiece.

MISS HUSKISSON, like so many of the female denizens of the Middle West, was tall and blonde and constructed on substantial lines. She was a girl whose appearance suggested the old homestead and fried pancakes and pop coming home to dinner after the morning's ploughing. Even her bobbed hair did not altogether destroy this impression. She looked big and strong and healthy, and her lungs were obviously good. She attacked the verse of the song with something of the vigour and breadth of treatment with which in other days she had reasoned with refactory mules. Her diction was the diction of one trained to call the cattle home in the teeth of Western hurricanes. Whether you wanted to or not, you heard every word.

The subdued clatter of knives and forks had ceased. The diners, unused to this sort of thing at the Cosmopolis, were trying to adjust their faculties to cope with the outburst. Waiters stood transfixed, frozen in attitudes of service. In the momentary lull between verse and refrain Archie could hear the deep breathing of Mr. Brewster. Involuntarily he turned to gaze at him once more, as refugees from Pompeii may have turned to gaze upon Vesuvius; and, as he did so, he caught sight of Mr. Connolly, and paused in astonishment.

Mr. Connolly was an altered man. His whole personality had undergone a subtle change. His face still looked as though hewn from the living rock, but into his eyes had crept an expression which in another man might almost have been called sentimental. Incredible as it seemed to Archie, Mr. Connolly's eyes were dreamy. There was even in them a suggestion of unshed tears. And when with a vast culmination of sound Miss Huskisson reached the high note at the end of the refrain and, after holding it as some storming-party, spent but victorious, holds the summit of a hard-won redoubt, broke off suddenly, in the stillness which followed there proceeded from Mr. Connolly a deep sigh.

Miss Huskisson began the second verse. And Mr. Brewster, seeming to recover from some kind of a trance, leaped to his feet.

"Great Godfrey!"

"Sit down!" said Mr. Connolly, in a broken voice. "Sit down, Dan!"

"He went back to his mother on the train that very day:
He knew there was no other who could make him bright and gay:
He kissed her on the forehead and he whispered, 'I've come home!'
He told her he was never going any more to roam.
And onward through the happy years, till he grew old and grey,
He never once regretted those brave words he once did say:

It's a long way back to mother's knee——"

The last high note screeched across the room like a shell, and the applause that followed was like a shell's bursting. One could hardly have recognized the refined interior of the Cosmopolis dining-room. Fair women were waving napkins; brave men were hammering on the tables with the butt-end of knives, for all the world as if they imagined themselves to be in one of those distressing midnight-revue places. Miss Huskisson bowed, retired, returned, bowed, and retired again, the tears streaming down her ample face. Over in a corner, Archie could see his brother-in-law clapping strenuously. A waiter, with a display of manly emotion that did him credit, dropped an order of new peas.

"Thirty years ago last October," said Mr. Connolly, in a shaking voice, "I——"

Mr. Brewster interrupted him violently.

"I'll fire that orchestra-leader! He goes to-morrow! I'll fire——" He turned on Archie. "What the devil do you mean by it, you—you——"

"Thirty years ago," said Mr. Connolly, wiping away a tear with his napkin, "I left me dear old home in the old country——"

"*My* hotel a bear-garden!"

"Frightfully sorry and all that, old companion——"

"Thirty years ago last October! 'Twas a

"The last high note screeched across the room like a shell, and the applause that followed was like a shell's bursting. Mr. Connolly sighed and wiped away a tear."

fine autumn evening, the finest ye'd ever wish to see. Me old mother, she came to the station to see me off."

Mr. Brewster, who was not deeply interested in Mr. Connolly's old mother, continued to splutter inarticulately, like a firework trying to go off.

"'Ye'll always be a good boy, Aloysius? she said to me," said Mr. Connolly, proceeding with his autobiography. "And I said: 'Yes, mother, I will!'" Mr. Connolly sighed and applied the napkin again. "'Twas a liar I was!" he observed, remorsefully. "Many's the dirty trick I've played since

then. 'It's a long way back to mother's knee.' 'Tis a true word!" He turned impulsively to Mr. Brewster. "Dan, there's a deal of trouble in this world without me going out of me way to make more. The strike is over! I'll send the men back to-morrow! There's me hand on it!"

Mr. Brewster, who had just managed to co-ordinate his views on the situation and was about to express them with the generous strength which was ever his custom when dealing with his son-in-law, checked himself abruptly. He stared at his old friend and business enemy, wondering if he could have heard aright. Hope began to creep back into Mr. Brewster's heart, like a shamefaced dog that has been away from home hunting for a day or two.

"You'll what!"

"I'll send the men back to-morrow! That song was sent to guide me, Dan! It was meant! Thirty years ago last October me dear old mother——"

Mr. Brewster bent forward attentively. His views on Mr. Connolly's dear old mother had changed. He wanted to hear all about her.

"'Twas that last note that girl sang brought it all back to me as if 'twas yesterday. As we waited on the platform, me old mother and I, out comes the train from the tunnel, and the engine lets off a screech the way ye'd hear it ten miles away. 'Twas thirty years ago——"

Archie stole softly from the table. He felt that his presence, if it had ever been required, was required no longer. Looking back, he could see his father-in-law patting Mr. Connolly affectionately on the shoulder.

ARCHIE and Lucille lingered over their coffee. Mr. Blumenthal was out in the telephone-box settling the business end with Wilson Hymack. The music-publisher had been unstinted in his praise of "Mother's Knee." It was sure-fire, he said. The words, stated Mr. Blumenthal, were gooey enough to hurt, and the tune reminded him of every other song-hit he had ever heard. There was, in Mr. Blumenthal's opinion, nothing to stop the thing selling a million copies.

Archie smoked contentedly.

"Not a bad evening's work, old thing," he said. "Talk about birds with one stone!" He looked at Lucille reproachfully. "You don't seem bubbling over with joy."

"Oh, I am, precious!" Lucille sighed. "I was only thinking about Bill."

"What about Bill?"

"Well, it's rather awful to think of him tied for life to that—that steam-siren."

"Oh, we mustn't look on the jolly old dark side. Perhaps—— Hallo, Bill, old top! We were just talking about you."

"Were you?" said Bill Brewster, in a dispirited voice.

"I take it that you want congratulations, what?"

"I want sympathy!"

"Sympathy?"

"Sympathy! And lots of it! She's gone!"

"Gone! Who?"

"Spectatia!"

"How do you mean, gone?"

Bill glowered at the tablecloth.

"Gone home. I've just seen her off in a cab. She's gone back to Washington Square to pack. She's catching the ten o'clock train back to Snake Bite. It was that damned song!" muttered Bill, in a stricken voice. "She says she never realized before she sang it to-night how hollow New York was. She said it suddenly came over her. She says she's going to give up her career and go back to her mother. What the deuce are you twiddling your fingers for?" he broke off, irritably.

"Sorry, old man. I was just counting."

"Counting? Counting what?"

"Birds, old thing. Only birds!" said Archie.

The Uncharted Coast

by

A. CONAN DOYLE

No. V. THE ABSOLUTE PROOF.

IN his recent work, "Life After Death," Professor Hyslop, who was formerly Professor of Logic at Columbia University and is now the chief American authority upon matters psychic, has a sentence which sounds rather intolerant. It runs: "Any man who does not accept the existence of discarnate spirits and the proof of it is either ignorant or a moral coward." The words are literally true, and yet what removes the sting is that there is really no reproach up to now in being ignorant. Much of the final absolute proof is very recent and is contained in works which have not been translated and which are expensive and difficult to get. It is true that we have Crawford's splendid work at Belfast and Crookes's researches of fifty years ago, but both of these needed the corroboration and elucidation of the Continental observers to bring out their full meaning. I have all the documents before me, and I will try in this article to show any man who is capable of adapting his mind to fresh facts that this tremendous issue is no longer a fair subject for debate, but has been definitely settled up to a certain point—a point which gives us a solid basis for the researches of the future. All recent discoveries, whether they be of aviation, wireless telegraphy, or other material novelties, are insignificant beside a development which shows us a new form of matter, with unheard-of properties, lying latent in all probability within each of us. By a strange paradox the searchers after spirit have come to know more about matter, and its extraordinary possibilities, than any materialist has learned.

It should first be stated that the development of psychic phenomena was a gradual one, and that it was some years after the Hydesville outbreak that actual materializations of spirit were reported. During the 'sixties and 'seventies they became more common, lending themselves greatly to fraud, as people had little critical knowledge as yet and darkness was a physical necessity for their production. Apart from the frauds, however, discriminating observers were aware that there was a large residuum of cases which were undoubtedly genuine. In examining and reporting these cases the witnesses averred that certain people, whom they called "materializing mediums," had the strange physical gift that they could put forth from their bodies a viscous, gelatinous substance which appeared to differ from every known form of matter in that it could solidify and be used for material purposes, and yet could be reabsorbed, leaving absolutely no trace even upon the clothes which it had traversed in leaving the body. This substance was actually touched by some enterprising investigators, who reported that it was elastic and appeared to be sensitive, as though it was really an organic extrusion from the medium's body. These views were naturally much ridiculed by scientific men, who disposed of them easily upon anatomical and also on general physical grounds. Later investigation has, however, shown, as I hope to demonstrate in this article, that in

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this as in other matters the early Spiritualists were the pioneers of truth, and that they had come upon the most singular manifestation of matter with which we have any acquaintance.

MME. ALEXANDRE-BISSON, a French lady with a scientific bent, set herself in the year 1909 to study this phenomenon, having as her subject a woman named Eva, who had the power of forming this substance, which Charles Richet, the great French physiologist, has named ectoplasm. She had as collaborator a German doctor, Schrenck-Notzing, who afterwards collected the notes of the sittings and had them published in French with Mme. Bisson's name appended, under the title "Les Phénomènes dits de Materialisation." A single sentence from the preface gives the gist of the book. He says: "We have very often been able to establish that, by an unknown biological process, there comes from the body of the medium a material, at first semi-fluid, which possesses some of the properties of a living substance, notably that of the power of change, of movement, and of the assumption of definite forms." He adds: "One might doubt the truth of these facts if they had not been verified hundreds of times in the course of laborious tests under varied and very strict conditions." Could there be a more complete vindication of those early Spiritualists who for two generations bore with patience the ridicule of the world? Schrenck-Notzing ends his dignified preface by exhorting his fellow-worker to take heart. "Do not allow yourself to be discouraged in your efforts to open a new domain for science, either by foolish attacks, by cowardly calumnies, by the misrepresentation of facts, by the violence of the malevolent, or by any other sort of intimidation. Advance always along the path that you have opened, thinking of the words of Faraday, 'Nothing is too amazing to be true.'"

SPIRIT-FACE WITH UNUSED ECTOPLASM ATTACHED.

"YOU CAN SEE THE STREAKY, VISCOUS STUFF HANGING LIKE ICICLES FROM THE CHIN, OR PROJECTING IN SHAPELESS LUMPS."

From Dr. Geley's forthcoming book, "From the Unconscious to the Conscious," by permission of Messrs. W. Collins, Sons, & Co., Ltd.

The methods of these wonderful experiments were as follows. All conceivable precautions were taken against fraud. Eva, the medium, seems, so far as one can trace her career, to have been no worse if she was no better than her fellows. A fierce controversy had raged round a previous series of experiments with her conducted in 1906 in Algiers, but Charles Richet and other observers had found no flaw in them. However, nothing was left to chance. The key of the séance room was kept in Mme. Bisson's own pocket. Eva was compelled to change into a special dress when in that room, undressing again when she emerged. She submitted to physical examinations at the hands of doctors. The illumination of the room was gradually increased until six strong, red, electric lamps were at work—red being, as in photography, the one bearable colour. Most important of all, a number of cameras, eight in the last period, were directed upon the medium from all angles, and these were operated by flashlight without warning, so that no motion upon her part could be unobserved. Altogether two hundred and one photographs were taken and reprinted in the book. The sittings lasted with intervals for four years, and were witnessed not only by Mme. Bisson and the German doctor, but by a number of scientific observers whose names are given.

The results are, in my opinion, the most notable of any investigation which has ever been recorded. It was testified by witnesses, and shown by the photographs, that there oozed from the medium's mouth, ears, nose, eyes, and skin this extraordinary gelatinous material. The pictures are strange and repulsive, but many of Nature's processes seem so in our eyes. You can see

this streaky, viscous stuff hanging like icicles from the chin, dripping down on to the body and forming a white apron, or projecting in shapeless lumps from the orifices of the face. When touched, or when undue light came upon it, it writhed back into the body as swiftly and stealthily as the tentacles of a hidden octopus. If seized and pinched, the medium cried aloud. It would protrude through clothes and vanish again, leaving hardly any trace upon them. With the assent of the medium, a small piece was amputated. It dissolved in the box in which it was placed as snow would have done, leaving moisture and some large cells which might have come from a fungus. The microscope also disclosed epithelial cells from the mucous membrane in which the stuff seemed to originate.

It should be explained that the usual Spiritualistic habit of putting the medium into a confined space formed by curtains was followed. This is called the cabinet. She sat therein upon a chair, but her hands always protruded, as an additional safeguard against fraud. The object of the cabinet is that some condensation of material, which we can best describe perhaps as a heavy vapour, is necessary before you get the ectoplasm. The methods call for clearer scientific definition, but in practice it is found that anything which will make an enclosed space and conserved force is of great importance. Those curious, curving draperies which are seen round spirit photographs are the means which the control upon the other side adopts for this end, and I have often observed that the spirit lights at a séance are hooded and flanked by some fine, filmy material for the same reason.

THOUGHT-FORM OR APPARITION IN FRONT OF EVA, BUILT UP OF ECTOPLASM.

From "Les Phénomènes dits de Matérialisation," by Mme. Bisson.

THE production of this strange ectoplasm is enough in itself to make such experiments revolutionary and epoch-making, but what follows is far stranger, and will answer the question in every reader's mind, "What has all this to do with spirits?"

You must know, then, utterly incredible as it may appear, that this substance, after forming, begins in the case of some mediums, Eva being one, to curdle into definite shapes, and those shapes are human limbs and human faces, seen at first in two dimensions upon the flat, and then moulding themselves at the edges until they become detached and complete. Very many of the photographs exhibit these strange phantoms, which are often much smaller than life. Some of these faces may represent thought-forms from the brain of Eva taking visible form, and some rough resemblance has been traced between some of them and pictures which she may have seen and stored in the memory. One, for example, looks like an extremely rakish President Wilson with a moustache, while another resembles a ferocious rendering of M. Poincaré. One of them shows the word "Miroir" printed over the head of the medium, which some critics have claimed as showing that she had smuggled in the journal of that name, though what the object of such a proceeding could be has not been explained. Her own explanation was that the controlling forces had in some way, possibly by rapport, brought in the legend in order to convey the idea that these faces and figures are not their real selves, but their selves as seen in a mirror.

Even now the reader may see no obvious connection with Spiritualism, but the next stage takes us all the way. When Eva is at her best, and it occurs only at long intervals and at some cost to her own health, there forms a complete figure; this figure is moulded to resemble some deceased person, the cord which binds it to the medium is loosened, a personality which either is or pretends to be that of the dead takes possession of it, and the breath of life is breathed into the image so that it moves and talks and expresses the emotions of the spirit within. The last word of the Bisson record is: "Since these séances and on numerous occasions the entire phantom has shown itself, it has come out of the cabinet, has

begun to speak, and has reached Mme. Bisson, whom it has embraced on the cheek. The sound of the kiss was audible." Was there ever a stranger finale of a scientific investigation? It may serve to illustrate how impossible it is for even the cleverest of materialists to find any explanation, of such facts which are consistent with his theories, that the only one which Mr. Joseph MacCabe, in his recent public debate with me, could put forward was that it was a case of the regurgitation of food! He seemed to me unaware that a close-meshed veil was worn over the medium's face in some of the experiments without in the least hampering the flow of the ecto-plasm.

THESE results, though checked in all possible ways, are none the less so amazing that the inquirer has a right to suspend judgment until they are confirmed. But this has been fully done. Dr. Schrenck-Notzing returned to Munich and there he was fortunate enough to find another medium, a Polish lady, who possessed the faculty of materialization. With her he conducted a series of experiments which he has recorded in his book, "Materialisation-phénomène." Working with Stanislawa, the Polish medium, and adopting the same strict methods as with Eva, he produced exactly the same results. His book overlaps that of Mme. Bisson, since he gives an account of the Paris experiments, but the most important part is the corroboration furnished by his check experiments in the summer of 1912 in Munich. The various photographs of the ectoplasm so far as they go are hardly to be distinguished from those already taken, so that any theory of elaborate fraud upon the part of Eva postulates the same fraud on the part of Stanislawa. Many German observers checked the sittings. In his thorough Teutonic fashion Schrenck-Notzing goes deeper into the matter than Mme. Bisson. He obtained hair from one of the materialized forms and compared it microscopically with hair from Eva (this incident occurred in the French series), showing by several tests that it could not be from the same person. He gave also the chemical result of an examination of a small portion of ectoplasm, which burned to an ash, leaving a smell as of horn. Chloride of soda (common salt) and phosphate of calcium were amongst the constituents. Finally, he actually obtained a cinematograph record of the ectoplasm pouring from the mouth of the medium. Part of this is reproduced in his book.

It should be explained that though the medium was in a trance during these experiments she was by no means inanimate. A separate personality seemed to possess her, which might be explained as one of her own secondary individualities, or as an actual obsession from outside. This personality was in the habit of alluding with some severity to the medium, telling Mme. Bisson that she needed discipline and had to be kept up to her work. Occasionally this person showed signs of clairvoyance, explaining correctly, for example, what was amiss with an electric fitting when it failed to work. A running accompaniment of groans and protests from Eva's body seems to have been a mere animal outcry apart from intelligence.

ONE observation of the German scientist is worth noting, as it suggests that great injustice may have been done in the past. He is commenting upon a case where Eva was entirely covered by a fantastic helmeted garment of ectoplasm and stood up from her chair. He says: "This case is interesting because it throws a light upon the state of so-called transfiguration, which in the sense used by the Spiritualists means that a medium plays the part of the spirit, since he is clad with materialized stuff and seeks to imitate the character of the person concerned. This transition stage is to be found in the career of nearly all materialization mediums. Literature records a number of exposures of such mediums acting the part of spirits, like the medium Bastian before Crown Prince Rudolph, Crookes's medium Miss Cook, Mme. Esperance, and others. In all these cases people seized the medium, but the stuff used for the disguise vanished instantly and could not afterwards be traced."

Spiritualists have been slow in advancing this plea, lest it seem to exonerate real fraud, but this conclusion from a man of science in an independent position should be set on record lest indiscriminate disgrace should fall upon the human hyena with his material muslin and the true medium in trance clad in ectoplasmic drapery.

These separate results of the German and the French investigators would seem final to any reasonable mind, but they are corroborated once again by the shorter research of Dr. Geley, of Paris, who held a series of sittings with Eva, summoning a hundred men of science to witness one or other of them. So strict were his tests that he winds up his account in "Physiologie Supernormale" with the words: "I will not merely say that there is no fraud. I will say that there has not been the possibility of fraud." Again he walked the old path and found the same results, save that the phantasms in his experiments took the form of female faces, sometimes beautiful

and, as he assures me, unknown to him. They may be thought-forms from Eva, for in none of his recorded results did he get the absolute living spirit. There was enough, however, to cause Dr. Geley to say: "What we have seen kills materialism. There is no longer any room for it in the world." By this he means, of course, the old-fashioned materialism of Victorian days, by which thought was a result of matter. All the new evidence points to matter being the result of thought. It is only when you ask "Whose thought?" that you get upon debatable ground. I append what is either a thought-form or a spirit-face sent to me by Dr. Geley as a Christmas-card. It is curious to observe that an unused wisp of ectoplasm still hangs from it. "They had great beauty and a remarkable appearance of life," says Dr. Geley, though they came as miniatures as well as full size.

Once again, then, Mme. Bisson is corroborated, and we have three separate investigators and two separate mediums giving identical results. Is it not a perfect insanity of incredulity to wave these things aside because they will not fit into our present philosophies? Surely it is evident that the time has come when the philosophies must be expanded to receive them.

FIGURE BUILT UP FROM EVA'S ECTOPLASM.

From "Les Phénomènes dits de Materialisation," by Mme. Bisson.

NOW, having thoroughly got it into our heads that it is possible for a person to evolve very singular stuff with a tendency to form human frames which seem for a time to be tenanted by manifesting spirits, let us hark back and apply the knowledge to cases which were proved but not understood before these wonderful experiments. At once the instance of Crookes and Florrie Cook in 1873 springs to the front. In this classic case, as is well known, the celebrated chemist for three years experimented with this young medium, who put herself at his disposal in order to clear herself of a charge of personation made against her. It may well have been an example of transfiguration, as may some other alleged cases which were said to have occurred in later years when she was Mrs. Corner. Crookes exonerated her completely as the result of his research. She was shut up in the dark time and again in his small study. Then, after an hour or so, there would emerge into the adjoining laboratory an entirely different woman, who moved, spoke, and gave her name as Katie King, saying that she was a spirit who had lived in the reign of Charles II., and was now permitted for a brief visit to inhabit the body moulded from Miss Cook, who could be heard, and on certain occasions seen, in the adjoining room. Naturally the obvious criticism was made that this *was* Miss Cook masquerading as a phantom, but the first objection to such a theory was that it makes Professor Crookes out to be either a lunatic or a deliberate liar. No one but a lunatic could be so deceived, and no one but a liar could declare that the new comer was four and a half inches taller than the medium, had beautiful brown hair, a long tress of which was traced up to the scalp and then severed (Miss Cook was a brunette), and finally that the pulse rate of the two women was entirely different. The whole course of Crookes's life proved that he was neither liar nor lunatic, and so a reasonable man could only believe that this prodigy corroborated by forty photographs was true, but totally unrelated to any other facts of the universe.

But now the matter appears otherwise.

Thanks to the recent researches we are in a position to enter that darkened room and to reconstruct what is happening to Florrie Cook. She lies with an occasional animal moan upon the sofa. From her there drains the vital ectoplasm, forming a cloud of viscous substance, a pattern, and finally a form. The form disengages, the cord breaks, and Katie King, infusing her spirit into this reconstruction of what was probably a simulacrum of her earthly body, walks forth to spend her strange brief hour upon earth, conversing with Professor Crookes, playing with his children, telling them stories of olden days, and finally, with the words, "My mission is finished," leaving them for ever. Her mission was to prove the survival of the spirit to an incredulous generation, and it would indeed have been accomplished had it depended upon the bravery of her witness, and not upon the dense stupidity and materialism of the scientific, religious, journalistic world in which he lived. Now after many days we are slowly understanding the message.

PROFESSOR CROOKES WITH THE SPIRIT KATIE KING.

THE ORIGINAL HAVING FADED, THIS REPRODUCTION WAS NECESSARILY MADE FIRMER IN OUTLINE AND DETAIL FOR OUR USE.

So much for the Crookes episode, and the light which has now been thrown upon it. But there is another famous series of investigations which are also confirmed and illuminated by this new knowledge. These are the very remarkable experiments made by Dr. Crawford, of Belfast, upon the medium Miss Goligher, and described in two successive books "The Reality of Psychic Phenomena" and "Experiments in Psychic Science." Miss Goligher, as her portrait will show, is a young lady of character and education, sprung from a decent Belfast family—a fact which has not prevented our opponents, in their desperate plight for an explanation, from endeavouring without a shred of evidence to depict her as a systematic fraud. It is a deplorable thing that people with this rare power, who submit themselves unpaid for the research of scientific men, should be assailed in this fashion, for it frightens others away, and makes the whole investigation more difficult.

The main lesson, as it seems to me, to be drawn from the Crawford experiments is that the ectoplasm is a substance which can be used for many purposes by the force which lies behind it. In the former cases it was used to build up moulds of the human figure. In the Belfast experiments this same ectoplasm was used for the making of rods or columns of power, heavy and yet impalpable objects, which protruded from the body (generally from the extremities) of the unconscious girl, and produced results such as raps, or the movement of objects, at a distance from her. Such a rod of power might be applied, with a sucker attachment, under a table and lift it up, causing the weight of the table to be added to that of the medium, exactly as if she had produced the effect by a steel bar working as a cantilever and attached to her body. Or it might be placed above the table and hold it down, a loss of weight of thirty, forty, or even fifty pounds being registered upon the weighing chair on which Miss Goligher sat. The medium became a mere residuum, with a third and more of her own substance outside herself, the difference showing itself rather in a refining of the whole body than in a visible loss of substance. One can well believe that under such abnormal circumstances any rough disturbance of the conditions which caused the external third to fly back with unnatural speed to the body would cause physical

suffering. I have known a medium have a broad weal from breast to armpit through the sudden elastic recoil of the ectoplasm. Is it a wonder, then, that Spiritualists object to the type of researcher who suddenly flashes a powerful electric torch in the middle of a séance? When this matter is more clearly understood our descendants will, I think, be appalled as well as amused by some of the incidents which have been the outcome of our ignorance.

Dr. Crawford's experiments have been an explanation and a justification of the ordinary phenomena of the dark séance. No philosophical or unprejudiced mind could have failed to see that results which are always of the same type, whether the conditions be produced in Iceland or in Java, must have fixed laws underlying them. Our critics have continually bemused themselves by considering individual cases and failing to take a broad view of the cumulative evidence. Dr. Crawford makes every detail plain. He has even, by staining with moist carmine a cloth in front of the medium, got crimson marks at a distance showing that the column of force as it pushed forward was solid enough to carry some of the staining agent with it. This is a particularly fine and convincing experiment.

This is but a very brief indication of the general line taken by this remarkable research. Once again a sceptic may say, "But this is physical power of some unknown type and not an intelligence apart from the sitters." A fuller knowledge, however, shows that at every stage there was a controlling intelligence, advising, directing, and showing its wishes by a code of signals. Whose intelligence was it? "I am quite satisfied in my own mind that the operators are discarnate human beings," says Dr. Crawford in his very latest work, with all the results before him. I do not see how anyone else is in a position to go behind his own interpretation of the facts which he has himself made clear. He appears to have begun his investigation in the agnostic attitude, which is the ideal starting-point for the truly scientific mind, but he had the courage and adaptability which made him gain positive results instead of that endless round of experiments leading to no conclusion which is typical of so many psychical researchers.

MISS KATHLEEN GOLIGHER.
THE MEDIUM IN DR. CRAWFORD'S CELEBRATED EXPERIMENTS.
Photo. Abernethy's Studios, Belfast.

SUCH, then, is the story of Mme. Bisson, of Dr. Schrenck-Notzing, of Dr. Geley, of Professor Crookes, and of Dr. Crawford. Can it be laughed away? Is it not time, after seventy years of ever-varying proof, that such an attitude be abandoned? But when it is abandoned, and when the conclusions have been accepted, what an eternity of ridicule is waiting for those solemn Panjandrums of Science who have for so long held up their warning hands lest the public should believe the truth!

The story of the Italian Cardinals and Galileo will seem reasonable when compared with the attitude of Victorian science to this invasion of the beyond. Of the theologians I say nothing, for that is another aspect of the matter, and they have only lived up to their own record; but material science, which made mock of mesmerism until for very shame it had to change its name to hypnotism before acknowledging it, has a sad reckoning before it in the case of Spiritualism. The fear is lest the reaction go too far, and in contemplating its colossal blunder we may forget or underrate the thousand additions which it has made to the comfort of the human race.

Be this as it may, who can read the facts here quoted and doubt that in those mists and shadows which I have described as hanging round the uncharted coast we have at least one solid, clear-cut cape which juts out into the sunshine? Behind, however, lies a hinterland of mystery which successive generations of pioneers will be called upon to explore.

Mme. Bisson's book, which is now unobtainable in the original (French) edition, is incorporated in Schrenck-Notzing's much larger work. "The Phenomena of Materialisation," just published by Messrs. Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner, and Co., with 225 large illustrations, of which the foregoing pictures are reductions (by consent of the publishers).

Young Marling

by

E. F. Benson

ILLUSTRATED BY W SMITHSON BROADHEAD

ON a cold November morning Sir Edward Stope, K.C.B.E., was driving over in his new Rolls-Royce from the "little box," as he called it, which he had lately bought near Holt, to shoot with his neighbour, Lord Fakenham. He had missed his way, had also experienced a punctured tyre, and was nearly an hour behind his time. He was a broad-shouldered, high-coloured man of about forty, and his massive face fully expressed the self-confidence which had so largely contributed to the success of his career. He had all the hustling qualities which enable a man to butt his way through the world, with the exception of physical courage, and he had got on supremely well without it. If he was not brave himself, he could at least terrify his subordinates.

Cold though it was, his sable coat kept him comfortable; on the empty seat opposite him were a couple of new Purdey guns and a small sack of cartridges, and his loader sat outside by the chauffeur. Later in the day his wife ("my lady," as he always termed her) would arrive in another Rolls-Royce, with her maid nursing her jewel-case on the seat opposite instead of the Purdey guns, and his valet on the box, and the baggage for their week-end visit on the top.

Mixed with the self-confidence inspired by himself and the perfection of his equipment was a certain secret elation which he would not have confessed even to "my lady." At last he had penetrated into the society and diversions of the class that he simultaneously disliked, despised, admired, and envied. He described himself as a self-made man, glorying in it with a thump of his great fist on the table, and yet never quite forgiving Providence for not having endowed him with some meagre inheritance that had come to him through a dozen titled generations instead of giving him the brains and industry which (by the fortunate coincidence of the war) had flooded him with uncountable gold. Thoroughly plebeian, he longed to mix with a class to which he did not belong on equal terms, and to continue despising it.

Secretly, then, to-day was to him a baptismal rite into a higher life; and the folk who lived behind the gate that was now swinging open to him should see that he was not the sort of man to stand any nonsense. If any of them failed in respect to a cheery self-made fellow, who was in the habit of speaking his mind and who had just bought six thousand "choice" acres of Norfolk, he would speedily find that Sir Edward Stope, K.C.B.E., was perfectly capable of taking care of himself. Of Lord Fakenham he felt no doubt: they had met a dozen times over county businesses, and, indeed, Stope would have gladly put up with a less punctilious politeness, a touch of more off-hand familiarity. Lord Fakenham, for instance, was always careful to address him as "Sir Edward," which showed a very proper respect, but Sir Edward was willing, even eager, to have the title dispensed with. Perhaps, however, he ought to make the first move himself, and he determined to hazard a "Fakenham," and thus pave the way.

An extremely pretty parlour-maid, whom he addressed as "girlie," opened the door to him, and ushered him into a shabby oak-panelled hall, where a young man was reading the paper in front of a log-fire. He did not get up when Stope entered, but merely nodded to him.

"The shooters have started," he said. "Lord Fakenham was sure you would excuse him beginning without you. If you take the road straight past the stables you'll soon hear or see something of them."

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"'Aren't you shooting?'
"'Apparently not. I hate shooting. Besides, it's so cold.'"

Apart from the fact that this slim, pink-and-white young gentleman did not get up when he addressed him, Stope rather liked this absence of ceremony.

"My fool of a chauffeur lost his way," he said, "and found a sharp flint. I'm glad Fakenham didn't wait for me. And aren't you shooting?"

"Apparently not. I hate shooting. Besides, it's so cold."

Stope pointed with his thumb towards the door through which the parlour-maid had vanished, and gave a knowing wink. He was determined to get on easy terms with everybody.

"Pretty girl that," he said. "Pleasanter to kiss a pretty girl than miss a pheasant, eh? I expect you'll be ringing the bell often enough this morning, now that you've got the house to yourself, and helping her to poke the fire."

Toby Marling gave him a long, amazed glance.

"Lor!" he said, at length, and taking up his paper paid no further attention to him.

STOPE wasted no more time on this effete specimen, but felt more convinced than ever that it was the middle-aged men who had won the war. Probably this sit-by-the-fire who hated shooting and had not enough manhood in him to appreciate a delicate little joke about the pretty parlour-maid had managed to be passed as unfit for active service, and had secured some A.D.C. appointment out of harm's way, where his chief duty was to arrange flowers for the dinner-table. Yet despite himself and the bottomless well of his self-confidence Stope smarted under the unspoken contempt which was so strongly redolent in the behaviour of this very odious young gentleman. He himself could never manage to show disapproval without being loud and rude, and even while he writhed he envied the secret of a certain insolence which was somehow compatible with perfect good breeding. He promised himself to find an opportunity of giving this lily-handed creature a good "set-down" in the smoking-room that evening, if he appeared there. But most likely he hated the smell of smoke and went to bed with a hot-water bottle when the ladies retired. This sarcastic reflection healed his smart, and when he joined the shooters he was quite himself again.

Lord Fakenham apologized very properly for having started without him, and, seeing the two guns and the loader, for not having mentioned that this was only a quiet day over stubble, and in pheasant covers depleted with the neglect consequent upon four years of war.

"There'll hardly be work for your second gun, Sir Edward," he said, "though I hope that by next year I shall be able to offer you a day more worthy of your prowess."

Stope found he could not bring out "Fakenham" naturally and abandoned that for the present.

"I'll send my man back, then," he said. "Hi, you there!" he called to his chauffeur.

An elderly man whom he had rather hoped was a Duke, but who was probably a gamekeeper, touched his hat.

"Perhaps you'd allow him to join the beaters, sir?" he said. "We're rather short-handed."

The party was only a small one, consisting of but three young men whose names his host casually mentioned, and a couple of girls, daughters of the house, who were walking with the shooters. But after the first moment of feeling slighted by not having a bigger day in front of him, Stope began to see another aspect. It showed a greater intimacy to ask him to a quiet country shoot; also he was, in spite of his self-confidence, rather relieved that the shooting was not to be on a two-gun scale, for though, during the last few weeks, he had assiduously practised his marksmanship on clay pigeons, his experience of "live game" was of the smallest.

There was a little conversation between his host and the gamekeeper as to where birds would break best from the cover that was to be beaten towards them, and Stope gathered that the place of honour was to be his. He was stationed by a hawthorn bush standing in the open some twenty yards from a big plantation of oaks with thick brushwood growing up among them. Some sixty yards away from him on his left was one of the young men accompanied by the elder of Lord Fakenham's daughters; the others were all out of sight round a bend of the woods on the right. Stope said something arch about this, and waited. Presently from far off there came the sound of calls and tappings of sticks against the tree-trunks, and before many minutes a rabbit lolloped out of cover, and not seeing Stope squatted in the long grass at the edge of it. Stope took careful aim, and was delighted to see it leap high in the air and then fall over on to its back. "That'll teach it to be a bunny," he thought to himself exultantly. Then looking round for approbation to the couple on the left he was pleased to see the girl calling her companion's attention to it. Probably she was admiring his skill, and he shouted, cheerfully:—

"I've done for that one. Let them all come!"

Presently a pheasant rose from inside the cover with clappings of startled wings, soared above the tree-tops and came rocketting over

where Stope stood. Had he had a second gun, none can say whether he would not have taught it to be a pheasant; as it was he did not impart that information. Another and another followed without casualty; a pigeon joined the escaping company, and a bird that ducked and jerked in its flight, which Stope, for fear it might be a starling or something of that kind, refrained from firing at. Rabbits scuttled out, one ran almost between his legs and continued running. Soon the noise of the approaching beaters sounded much louder, and the young man on his left stopped shooting and came towards him.

"You had better not fire any more towards the cover," he said. "Beaters are close."

This seemed to Stope a very considerable piece of impertinence, and he raised his gun for a shot at a hare that came galloping along the edge of the wood. At the moment a beater's head appeared above the brushwood inside, not forty yards away, and he began to understand. He waited till the hare doubling out into the open was not less than seventy yards off, and fired two scornful barrels at it.

"That'll hurry Pussy up a bit," he said, complacently.

THE day passed without much advance being made in intimacy, though the politeness of the others generally to Stope was flawless, and they returned home to find a considerable influx of guests who had arrived for the week-end. The spiritless young man who had stopped at home all day seemed strangely popular, and at his suggestion after tea a gramophone was turned on and half-a-dozen young couples shuffled and slid about the room in an anæmic sort of fashion. There were not enough girls, so often a couple of men danced together, which seemed very contemptible to Sir Edward.

"Not much fun in that, my lady," he observed, genially, to Lady Fakenham, "and I'm sure I don't know what it is they think they're dancing. Can't we have a bit of a polka and give me the honour of a turn with you? I'll soon show you that my dancing days aren't over yet."

"But I'm afraid mine are, Sir Edward," said she, "and as for a polka, I wonder if anyone knows it."

The dance came to an end, and Toby approached, leaning on his partner's arm and talking in falsetto.

"Oh, he's so naughty!" he observed to Lady Fakenham. "He's been saying such things to me. Where's my chaperon?"

"Toby, can we have a polka for Sir Edward?" she asked.

"Polka, what's that?" asked Toby, innocently. "Oh, it's something in the dim ages, isn't it?"

"There's more sense in a polka than in all that scraping and sliding, young man," said Stope.

"Lor!" said Toby again. He did not seem to speak to Stope, he just said it, as if talking to himself, and there precisely was the worst of it.

Throughout the evening Stope grew more and more infuriated with him, and more determined to give him one of the great "set-downs." At dinner Toby asked silly riddles, drank no wine, called everybody "my dear," and said he hated tobacco. There was only one allusion to the shooting that day, and it seemed to Stope that this, for no reason, was rather hurriedly covered up by another topic, which gave him no opportunity of alluding to the rabbit which he had so firmly shot. It was Toby who cut short this conversation, and began for the second time on the subject of the Russian ballet. After dinner there was more of the anæmic dancing, and a rubber of bridge in the adjoining room. Here, since his anecdote about the rabbit had been thwarted, Stope promised himself a great accession of glory, for his bridge-playing in the days of his villa-residence at Willesden had been locally held to be one of the most stupendous intellectual feats of modern times. He was accustomed to vent hints and comments at the conclusion of a hand to his partner and his adversaries, and now proceeded to do so.

"That was the turning-point in the game, partner," he said, "when I drew Lord Fakenham's last trump. You shouldn't have parted with your last trump, Lord Fakenham."

"The alternative was to revoke," said he.

"And I'm sure I shouldn't have quarrelled with you if you had. Trust me, I should have exacted my pound of flesh. No, you should have returned your partner's lead two tricks before that, if you follow me, and put the lead into his hand. Then you'd have caught me, for I was playing a risky game. But it was difficult to follow; no wonder that you didn't think of it. Let me see: it's my declaration again. Well, I'll give you two no-trumps."

A heavy disaster was the result, and Lady Fakenham, Stope's partner, came in for her share of critical instruction.

"You should have taken me out with two hearts, my lady," he said. "Then we should have been all comfortable."

"But I should have had to say three hearts," said she.

"Never mind that. Three hearts would have been a very good call over my two no-trumps. Don't be afraid of over-calling; but there it is, and it can't be helped. We've

all got to learn the game, and Rome wasn't built in a day."

Toby cut in at the end of this rubber and was partner with Stope, who saw the opportunity approaching of a good "set-down."

Toby had to play the hand, and during the progress of it Stope indulged in a series of smiles and shrugs, to indicate his indulgence towards this childish exhibition. Eventually Toby, with hideous cunning, secured a grand slam, leaving his adversaries with an unplayed ace.

"Well, well; there's more than one way of playing a hand!" said Stope. "I should have liked to have been your adversary there."

"And a hundred above," said Toby. "And thirty aces. Rich!"

The hand that followed made Stope's head reel, for they never played like that at Willesden. He mentioned a club. Lord Fakenham said a heart, Toby said two diamonds, and the fourth player passed. On which Stope, thinking that Toby held a long suit of diamonds, for he himself had queen, ace, said nothing at all, Lord Fakenham doubled two diamonds, and Toby, without hesitation, declared two no-trumps, which contented everybody. On which the leader did not dare to lead diamonds, of which he had only two, through his partner, and Toby's hand gradually showed that he had got no diamonds of the slightest value, though he had declared two. Though they won the game, Stope could not let this sort of thing pass without comment.

"That's not bridge," he said; "you declared two diamonds, partner, and you only hold three little ones."

"Wanted to see where they were," said Toby, wearily.

Lord Fakenham laughed.

"You're too clever to live, Toby," he said. "But supposing I hadn't doubled?"

"My dear, you or your partner were bound to if you had them," said Toby, "If you hadn't got them, my partner had. I had a no-trumps anyhow. My partner did have them, though he didn't say so. If you doubled I had the switch, if not I was content to play with diamonds."

Stope picked up his cards.

"A bad declaration," he said. "A rotten declaration, in fact."

Toby sighed. "Think about it," he said.

DURING the next deal Stope most unfortunately revoked.

"I should have liked to have been your adversary there!" said Toby, in a regretful echo. "Barley water, please."

Lady Fakenham intervened.

"Toby, are you going to Paris on Monday?" she asked.

"If it's not too windy," said Toby. "Let's see; that's a hundred and fifty above. Bad egg! Beastly egg!"

Stope sat impotently fuming. Everything that Toby did seemed specially designed to irritate him, and in especial Toby's bland demeanour in the face of his own hectoring. He hated the new languid class of young man who found it too cold to shoot, who shuffled about the floor and called it dancing, drank barley water, said "my dear" to everybody, and was going to Paris if it was not too windy. He too was going to Paris on Monday, and with the scorn of a good sailor pictured a green, dishevelled Toby crawling off the boat after a bad passage, having been lured by a delusive windlessness into facing the pains and perils of the sea. Stope had not the art of soft answers which inflame wrath, as this "missie" had, but he would have been willing to bet that before he went to bed that night he would have brought out one of the "set-downs" that made his unfortunate clerks turn scarlet and shift from one foot to another as he volleyed contempt and angry sarcasm from point-blank range. He longed to have five minutes alone with Toby.

Opportunities always await the eager, and it so happened that he and Toby were left in the smoking-room when the rest had slid away to bed. Stope wasted no time in preliminary crackings of his whip.

"I should think you were tired after your strenuous day," he said. "Mind you take care of yourself. We can't afford to lose energetic young fellows like you."

Toby finished his yawn.

"Charming of you to say so," he remarked.

"Glad you find it charming. I suppose you're tired out with strenuousness during the war. What part did you take in it, by the way?"

Toby considered.

"Oh, I did little bits of things," he said.

"I thought so. Nice little soft jobs. Plenty of dancing and lawn tennis, I suppose?"

"Yes, that sort of thing among others," said Toby, diffidently.

"I'm sure your country ought to be proud of you. I never caught your name, by the way."

"Marling," said Toby, gently.

"Oh! Any relation to that young Marling who brought down those two Zeppelins from his aeroplane?"

Toby gave a slight smile.

"No, I don't think I'm any relation," he said.

"Not likely, I should think. And so you're going to Paris on Monday if there's not too much wind. Bad sailor, I suppose.

Don't cross unless it's quite calm. I'm going to Paris, too, that day."

"Are you, indeed?" said Toby. "Come along in my 'plane; I'm flying. It'll save you a lot of time."

Stope got up and looked about for a candle, and Toby watched him with a broadening smile.

"Well, that's very kind of you," said Stope. "But I hardly know what to say."

"Say Yes," said Toby. "I'll start any time that suits you. I'm trying a new machine."

"Ah, well, perhaps another day," said the unfortunate Stope. "I've a lot of luggage on this trip."

"Plenty of room," said Toby.

Stope lit the candle.

"Well, I think I'll be turning in now," said he.

"During the next deal Stope most unfortunately revoked."

"I don't think you quite like the idea of it," said Toby.

"Well, I should like to know something about your capacities," began Stope.

Toby rose.

"Oh, that's all right," he said; "I'm quite a decent pilot. You see, I'm not exactly a relation of that young Marling, am I? You couldn't call me a relation."

PERPLEXITIES.

By HENRY E. DUDENEY.

526.—COUNTING OUT THE BLACKS.

HERE is an interesting little counting-out puzzle, on the lines of the ancient one of the Christians and Turks. The four white men want to count out the four black fellows, for some purpose or other, with that appearance of fairness that is so illusory in these matters. The man marked H is to do the counting, calling himself "one," G "two," F "three," E "four," and so on, in the direction of the arrow. When a man is counted out he retires from the ring and the count starts afresh at the next man. Now, it is obvious that the least common multiple of 8, 7, 6, 5, which is 840, will count out all the blacks, because any multiple of 8 will knock out A, then any multiple of 7 will knock out B, a multiple of 6 will remove C, and a multiple of 5 will dismiss D. But this was much too high a number to suit Mr. H, so he chose the smallest number possible, 30, and counted out the blacks in the order C, A, B, D. Can you discover the smallest possible number that would count out the four blacks if the first one to retire was to be D? Remember the count always begins at H and goes in the direction indicated.

527.—AN ENIGMA.

I AM only a word of five letters, but I have caused great calamities. Take away my head and I adorn an estate. Behead me once more and I am a place where all the world once congregated. If at first you curtail me, I am a mineral. Curtail once more and I am a fashionable resort. Yet if instead you cut off both my head and my tail it does not deteriorate my value.

528.—THE HORSESHOE PUZZLE.

THIS is a simple little puzzle, but I have seen people perplexed by it for some time. Given a paper horseshoe similar to the one in the illustration, can you cut it into seven parts with two straight clips of the scissors, so that each part shall contain a nail hole? There is no objection to your shifting the pieces and putting them together after the first cut, only you must not bend or fold the paper in any way.

529.—A NEW STREET PUZZLE.

BROWN and Tompkins lived in the same street, which contained more than twenty houses, but fewer than 500, all numbered 1, 2, 3, 4, etc., throughout. Brown discovered that all the numbers from 1 upwards to his own number inclusive summed to exactly double the sum of all the numbers from 1 up to, and including, his friend Tompkins's house. Now what were the numbers of their respective houses?

Solutions to Last Month's Puzzles.

521.—CHANGING PLACES.

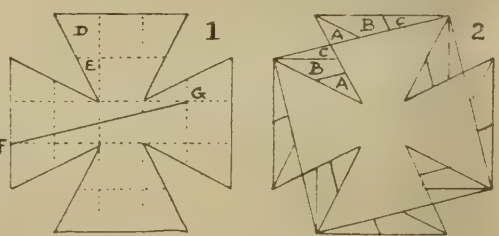
PLAY as follows: 1–5, 14–11, 3–9, 16–12, 9–3, 11–16, 5–7, 12–10, 7–5, 10–14, 5–7, 14–13, 3–8, 13–1, 8–14, 1–4, 7–5, 4–3, 5–13, 3–4, 13–9, 4–3, 9–10, 3–7, 10–2, 7–5, 2–10, 16–1, 10–12, 1–6, 14–8, 5–1, 8–14, 6–3, 12–16. And the required exchanges of position have been made in 35 moves. I have not yet succeeded in finding a shorter solution.

522.—THE REPEATED QUARTETTE.

MULTIPLY 273863 by 365 and the product is 99959995. Working the problem backwards, any number whatever consisting of eight figures with the first four repeated is divisible by 73 (and by 137) without remainder, and if it ends in 5 or 0 is divisible by 365 (or by 50005). Knowing this, the highest possible product can be written down at once.

523.—THE VICTORIA CROSS.

FIGURE 1 shows that the cross is built up of seventeen of those little dotted squares, for the two pieces, D and E, if cut out, will fit together and form a square.



The line F G will therefore be the side of our required square, as shown in figure 2. The only difficulty lies in cutting out those three little pieces, A, B, C, and packing them in as shown. The cut dividing the upper A and B is parallel to the upper side of the left-hand arm of the cross, and the cut dividing B and C starts at a point in the middle of the upper side of the cross and is parallel to the left side of the upper arm of the cross. There are thirteen pieces in all.

524.—ANOTHER UNSOLVED ENIGMA.

ONE'S first guess was "The Soles and 'Eels," but, as it is not recorded that there were any fish in the Ark, and the Flood had receded, these would probably not be within hearing distance! The question remains an open one for the present.

525.—A WALKING PUZZLE.

IT will be found (and it is the key to the solution) that the man from B can walk 7 miles while the man from A can walk 5 miles. Say the distance between the towns is 24 miles, then the point of meeting would be 14 miles from A and the man from A walked 3 miles per hour, while the man from B walked $4\frac{1}{2}$ miles per hour. They both arrived at 7 p.m. exactly.

A NIGHT CALL

by

G·LESLIE CRUMP

ILLUSTRATED BY SYDNEY SEYMOUR LUCAS

SPLASHING steadily along the lonely, rain-swept road, the clerical-looking gentleman went on through mire and puddle till he saw above the high hedge the roof and chimneys of a large house which stood alone in spacious grounds.

He stopped, and glanced hurriedly up and down the road. Then, jumping the ditch, he scrambled up the wet bank and a moment later was crouching beneath the dripping hedge.

There shone from the upper window of the house a light, and the watcher anxiously awaited its disappearance. He had not long to wait. The clock in the village church struck eleven, and within a minute of the last stroke the light was extinguished.

"Good!" said the watcher, coming out from the hedge, but not on the side on which he had entered.

He found himself on the gravel path that skirted the lawn, and made haste to get off it, for gravel paths are treacherous things to those on errands like his.

Striding across the lawn he reached the path again. A leap landed him in the flower-bed that lay along the wall of the house, and he walked on soft earth till he came to a side-door.

The hours that he had spent, book in hand, in the adjoining field during the daytime; his late evening strolls; his tactful inquiries in the village—all had been productive.

Posing as the Reverend Mr. Littleby Jones, rector of a North-country parish, he had visited the house before, and had found a charming host in Dr. Parker Dobson, F.R.C.S., the famous surgeon, who had kindly invited him to lunch, and afterwards shown to him his collection of gems. That had been most interesting, for almost every stone had a history. The ruby that had been given to the surgeon by the Nabob of Guadalja as a token of his gratitude for the skill that had saved his eldest son's life; a pink pearl the size of a filbert, the gift of a European monarch; and the Hurlingham sapphire—all these he had been allowed to handle, and he had done so without showing the excitement that possessed him or disclosing the fact that his knowledge of precious stones was far more extensive than that of the average country clergyman.

Finally, Dr. Parker Dobson had most obligingly taken him over the house to show him the ingenious system of electric alarms by which he protected his collection from theft.

"Good-bye, Mr. Jones," he had said, as he had heartily shaken hands. "Whenever you are in this district again I shall be delighted to see you."

As he took from his pocket a small drill the clerical-looking gentleman recollected these words and smiled.

He started to bore a ring of holes round the lock. The lower windows were armed with stout iron bars, and it was much easier to cut away the lock of the side-door and enter in a manner that befitted his cloth—his smile grew broader.

With a slender saw he cut through the wood between the holes. Inserting his finger into the keyhole he lifted out the lock with the wood attached and dropped it on the flower-bed.

Through the hole thus made he thrust a cautious hand. He found the wires connected with the alarm and severed them with pliers.

With a telescopic rod he pushed back

the bolts which secured the door at the top and bottom.

Inside the house he placed a heavy chair against the door, and then removed his dark raincoat and hat and hung them on a stand. With the aid of a mirror he wiped from his face several dead leaves which he had brought from the hedge, adjusted his clerical collar, and took off his wet boots. From his bag he produced a pair of rubber-soled slippers and put them on.

First he tried the study. Embers still glowed in the grate and the air was fragrant with cigar smoke. On a small table at the side of the fireplace was a pile of cigar boxes, and these first claimed the visitor's attention. Lovingly he handled box after box, scanning their labels in the light of the electric lamp.

There were Henry Clays, Murias, Villar y Villars, and many other famous brands of various strengths and sizes. He went through them till he found the box of 1904 crop of Calixto Lopez's that he had sampled on his previous visit. One of these he lighted with a wooden spill, and then began his search for the jewels.

He flashed his lamp round the room. Bookcases lined the walls. On the mantel were several pieces of china which he knew to be valuable, but the bag he had with him was a small one and he regretfully turned away.

A glance showed him that the cases which held the gems during the daytime were now empty. He looked warily round him—perhaps they were in the tall cabinet near the window. It was heavily built and the door was locked.

He tried key after key from the bunch he had brought from his pocket, but none fitted. Kneeling on the carpet he rapidly treated the lock in the same way in which he had treated that of the side-door.

The house was silent but for the gentle boring of his drill and the ticking of the clock on the shelf.

At length the door swung open. The light of his lamp shone on a gleaming skeleton. He started back with a hastily-strangled cry of horror, knocking over his lamp and extinguishing it. As he groped for his lamp his fingers touched the leg-bone of the skeleton, and the other bones, each joined to each by flexible hinges of catgut, set up a ghostly rattling. Shuddering, he quickly closed the door and rose.

Thoroughly though he searched, at the end of half an hour he had not found the gems. He had forced several small cabinets; one contained a microscope, and the others bottles and specimens.

The drawing-room, after most minute examination, yielded nothing but a small china dog which, taking his fancy, he pocketed. High and low he searched, even looking inside the grand piano and the music-stool.

He left the drawing-room and went silently upstairs. Avoiding doors which he knew to open on bedrooms he came at last to one that was locked. Once more he got out his keys and systematically tried them till he heard the wards of the lock move over.

THE room which he entered was long and narrow. In one corner a small blue flame flickered under a glass vessel of steaming liquid. He sniffed the air curiously before switching on the light of his lamp. He shivered—the atmosphere of the place was eerie. The light of his lamp showed him tall, glass-fronted cupboards containing bottles, specimen jars, and strangely-shaped glassware. It was the surgeon's laboratory. He decided that the gems were not kept there, and putting out his lamp crept towards the door.

In the corridor he muffled a cough. The cold air of the laboratory had affected his chest, which had been weak from birth. He stood for a moment in anxious thought—was he going to have an attack of asthma? He listened carefully to his breathing, but it seemed perfectly normal, and his fear passed away.

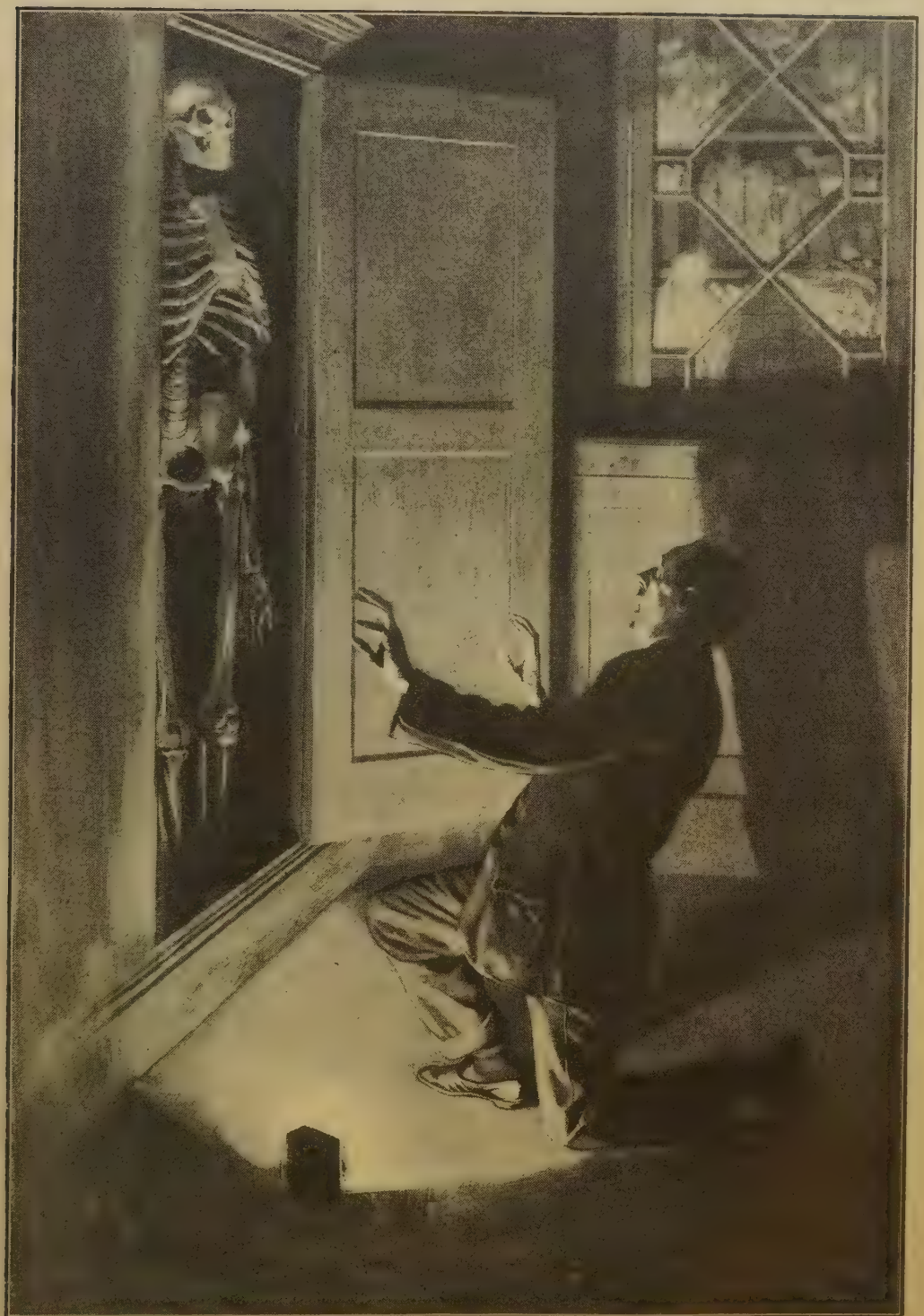
His mind returned to the problem of the stones. Should he try the bedrooms? He put his ear to the keyhole of the room in which Dr. Parker Dobson slept. His ear caught a musical note, deep, rich, and intermittent. An idea arrested him as his fingers closed over the handle.

In the study under the window there was a curtain, but the shock of finding the skeleton and his preoccupation with the china had made him forget to look behind it. It might hide a safe.

Back he went to the study. He had been right. Stooping, he examined the door of the safe, and smiled as he read the words on the brass label—"Fire and Burglar Proof."

The manufacturers claimed too much—in ten minutes he had opened it. There was a small drawer inside, placed on the floor of the safe, and so strongly constructed that the task of opening it proved almost as lengthy as had the forcing of the heavy door itself. An unerring instinct told him that the gems were inside this drawer, and he worked patiently with his delicate drills and pincers till a click sounded in the small lock.

He tried the handle again, but found it immovable. Then he discovered a small steel rod, cunningly hidden in a groove along



"At length the door swung open. The light of his lamp shone on a gleaming skeleton. He started back with a hastily-strangled cry of horror."

the outside of the drawer—that was the secret. He lifted it with his pliers, and grasped the front of the drawer.

He pulled it out and had much ado in suppressing a cry of triumph at the sight of the leather bags nestling inside. To make sure that he had found what he sought he opened one. A large emerald rolled out into his palm, followed by several smaller.

After he had closed the door of the safe and pulled the curtain over it, he drew a chair to the table and opened the rest of the bags. All held stones. Rubies, emeralds, pearls, sapphires, and diamonds, shot forth in flashing streams as he inverted the bags on the tablecloth.

He picked out the large Indian ruby and held it in his palm in the rays of the lamp. Its wondrous internal fires fascinated him.

"Splendid!" he whispered.

He sat gloating over his spoils, sometimes filling a hand with the glittering stones and pouring them into the palm of the other; sometimes selecting a particularly choice specimen and holding it up to the lamp. He estimated their total value at several thousand pounds.

The clock on the mantel showed a few minutes before midnight. Outside the storm was rising, and the windows shook from time to time under gusts that threw the rain against them like hail.

He shrugged his shoulders as he thought of the long walk before him. Perhaps, if he waited, the weather would improve. In the meantime he would visit the pantry.

It was not long before he returned, laden to the chin with crockery and eatables.

First he cleared the table and set the cloth, for he was something of a stylist, and scorned the hastily-snatched meals of the lower orders of his profession.

There were stuffed olives, anchovies, and potato salad. He made up the fire and put a saucepan of mulligatawny soup on to heat. Fish would take too long to cook, but he had found a cold chicken. To follow that he had Stilton cheese and celery, while his dessert consisted of grapes, peaches, and walnuts.

A bottle of a vintage Chambertin, taken from the cellarette in the dining-room, stood in the fender, and he found some 1835 Fine Champagne in the sideboard.

Spreading a napkin over his clerical waistcoat, he started on the olives as *hors-d'œuvre* while the soup was warming.

Everything was very much to his liking, and when at last he left the table the surgeon's noble Chambertin was circulating to his finger-tips.

And then——

He raised his head and listened. A small sound, like that of a distant bagpipe, came to his ears. He took a deep breath, and found that the noise was from his own chest. It was repeated with every breath he took. His face became anxious and drawn.

"Confound it!" he muttered, rising.

His walk through the rain, followed by the heavy meal, had brought on an attack of asthma. As the paroxysm developed his breathing became noisier. His heart was pounding in his side, and an inflexible band seemed stretched round his chest. His face was flushed and his eyes were unnaturally bright.

He sat down again, bending forward in the chair, with hands pressed to hips. How long would the attack last? What if it proved so severe as to render him helpless? The fear was on him fast again.

For years he had treated himself with injections of adrenalin; but he had none with him now, for he had been free of the complaint for months.

He remembered the laboratory. He would surely find the drug there, but had he strength to go upstairs?

From one of the small cabinets he took a hypodermic syringe, and then went slowly towards the door. He moved noisily, and every step he took deprived him of breath.

Gripping the baluster he began to mount the stairs. His progress was slow and painful. Halfway up he raised his head and counted the stairs he had yet to climb. There were ten. He stopped and clung to the baluster. Ten more, ten more—each was a horrible effort.

At length he reached the top stair and dragged himself as silently as he could to the laboratory door. He unlocked it and entered.

There were hundreds of bottles. Some labelled with strange names, others with formulæ which told him nothing. There were amber bottles, blue bottles, bottles with glass caps and queerly-made stoppers, but none of them was labelled "Adrenalin."

Perhaps some of those unreadable formulæ meant adrenalin. Brokenly he cursed the conceits of science. He could stand no longer. Groaning aloud in the throes of suffocation he made a desperate attempt to hold himself erect, but failed. He tottered towards a chair and fell upon the seat. His foot swung round, struck the glass panel of a cupboard door, and the next moment the house echoed with the crash of falling glass.

AWAKENED by strange sounds, Dr. Parker Dobson sat up in bed and listened. He heard a curious wheezing, which might have come from a defective harmonium, and someone seemed to be

moving about. Then came the noise of breaking glass.

He got out of bed and opened the door. Looking up the corridor he saw a triangle of light streaming across the carpet from the laboratory door. Putting on dressing-gown and slippers, he stole along till he could see into the room.

A man, moaning in pain, was doubled up in a chair near the window. An electric lamp blazed on the bench.

"Hi!" cried the surgeon. "What the devil are you doing here?"

The man raised his head and disclosed to the astonished medical man the features and clerical garb of the North-country clergyman who had lunched with him two days before.

"The Reverend Littleby Jones!"

Before Dr. Dobson could take a step forward the other had drawn an automatic pistol and was pointing it unsteadily at the surgeon's head.

"Adrenalin!" he gasped.

The doctor noted the heaving chest, the flushed face, and distended eyes.

"Asthma?" he queried.

The other glared at him, and strove in vain to speak. With a terrible effort he rose from the chair and staggered towards the surgeon.

"Ad-ren-'lin," he wheezed.

The surgeon's sleep-dimmed senses were slowly grasping the character of his strange patient.

"You want me to inject adrenalin? Before I do anything of the sort I want to know how you got here. Sit down again——"

"Quick—or—I'll—shoot!" cried the sufferer, thrusting forward the pistol.

"Very well," replied the surgeon, drawing back. "There is none here."

He stepped towards the door.

The burglar motioned with his weapon.

"No tricks—I'm—coming, too."

THEY went down to the study together, the sufferer leaning heavily on the doctor's arm, but with his pistol ready. When they reached the room the burglar sank into a chair, while the surgeon lit the lamp and drew the curtains.

The sight of the littered tablecloth seemed to amuse Dr. Dobson. He chuckled before turning towards the cabinet, in which after a search that took some minutes he found the drug and a syringe. Setting the syringe and bottle on the table, he took down a heavy book from one of the shelves.

"I am very much interested in your case, my friend," he began, urbanely, consulting the index. "For, so far as I remember, I did not come across such an instructive example of spasmodic asthma during the seven years I was a general practitioner."

He glanced at the man who sat fighting and struggling for breath in the chair.

"Let me see," he went on, "if your symptoms correspond with those given in this excellent book on therapeutics—ah, page seventy-two."

He started to read aloud.

"'In chronic cases the paroxysm often makes its appearance after a heavy meal, especially if the patient be so unwise as to take one late at night. Stimulants should be avoided, since by raising the arterial pressure they conduce to an attack.'

"My friend," he said, gravely, waving his hand towards the table, "why did you drink Chambertin? And I see you've had Stilton cheese, too! Tut tut!"

"Adren—" gasped the other, feebly.

"In a moment," answered the surgeon, soothingly. "I must confirm my diagnosis. My province is surgery, you know; I am not a physician."

He took up the book again, and read:—

"'Various drugs are of service in checking the paroxysm. The inhalation of ether, ethyl bromide'—h'm. Ah, here we have it: 'The subcutaneous injection of adrenalin is recommended if cardiac disease be absent!' Is that what you want?"

"Quick!" cried the burglar, chokingly, levelling the pistol again at Dobson.

"'If not relieved the patient may die of dyspnœa—suffocation,'" the other went on, quietly. "Well, after all," he said, closing the book, "the word means only shortness of breath, which is what most of us die of. Hold out your wrist!"

The surgeon sterilized the syringe in the flame of a spirit lamp and filled it.

"Oh, it's adrenalin," he said, in reply to the man's frantic gesture, turning the label of the bottle towards him.

As he pressed the needle home he smiled.

"That better?" he asked, genially, when the operation was finished.

The other nodded. Already his breathing was becoming easier.

He sat more upright, and his grip on the arm of the chair relaxed.

"Do you know," said the surgeon, cheerily, as he wiped the syringe, "you are the first person I have ever treated at the point of a pistol."

The burglar managed a feeble grin.

Taking a chair the doctor watched his patient closely. The paroxysm had almost subsided, but certain other symptoms were making their appearance.

"Excuse me," the doctor said, smilingly. "What is your normal occupation, Mr. Jones? Are you a clergyman-burglar, or a burglar-clergyman? It is very puzzling."

The other was silent.

"Have you taken Orders?" the surgeon asked. "You certainly played the part very well at lunch the other day."

Avoiding the doctor's gaze, the burglar looked at the clock.

"I must be going," he said, rising shakily.

"Pardon me," asked Dr. Dobson, mildly, "but did you find the stones?"

His visitor sat down again. He gazed for some minutes steadily down at the carpet, then with an effort he raised his head and looked at the doctor.

"Ah," observed Dr. Dobson. "You feel rather weak. Pray take your own time. I am in no hurry."

Silence fell between the two men, the bogus clergyman sitting huddled in the chair, while the other watched intently.

"Did you find the stones?" the doctor at length asked again.

The burglar patted his coat-pocket.

"I found them," he replied. "But perhaps you will be relieved to hear that I do not propose taking all of them. By your prompt treatment you—er—well—you extricated me from a very awkward position, and I am as capable of gratitude as any other man."

Taking the five bags from his pocket he threw them on to the table.

"Let me tell you what I propose doing," he went on, opening them one by one and pouring out the contents on the cloth. "You shall select one stone from each bag. You will no doubt choose the largest and

"He glanced at the man who sat fighting and struggling for breath in the chair. 'Let me see,' he went on, 'if your symptoms correspond with those given in this excellent book on therapeutics.'"

most valuable ones, but I do not mind, because the smaller ones are easier for me to get rid of. Then I shall ask you to sit quietly in your chair while I secure you with the rope I have in my bag."

"That is very good of you," murmured the surgeon, drumming absently on the table while the other began to arrange the stones on the cloth.

"Now, doctor, come along," he said, when he had finished. "But remember I have this." He pointed to the pistol, which lay on the table, but, unperturbed, the doctor bent over the gems, fingering them lovingly, selecting one here and there and putting it aside.

When the burglar spoke again the doctor remarked with satisfaction a certain thickness in the man's speech. His actions appeared slow and heavy, and the surgeon noticed a slight drooping of the eyelids. He waited a minute longer, and then walked leisurely to the fireplace, where he stood, with his hands behind him, smilingly regarding his visitor.

"Er—Mr. Jones," he began, "your visit here to-night will, I fear, prove somewhat disappointing. You forced my safe and took my jewels. You supped so unwisely as to precipitate an attack of asthma to which you almost succumbed; yet, after taking all this trouble, you will have to leave the house without my collection. Your return to your flock will be considerably delayed, too. Let me tell you what *I* propose doing. In the hall there is a telephone——"

With a low cry the burglar stretched out his hand towards the pistol, but could not reach it, and his hand fell back heavily to his side.

"Ha, my friend!" cried the doctor, in a voice of triumph, as he grimly regarded the man before him. "I took the liberty of adding a little hyoscine, a drug with which you are perhaps unacquainted, to that adrenalin. A minute more, and you will not be able to raise so much as your little finger. I think I will telephone for the police."

Improving Our Games—Billiards.

For the improvement of billiards it is necessary to bring the game up to date. The table should be remodelled by a first-rate Futurist, who will work out an entirely different set of angles to those now in use. Next, the balls will require revising, as the old round ones will be quite hopeless for negotiating the new angles, while the cues will also need attention so that the revised balls may be

THE STRAND MAGAZINE

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IRIS AND THE DANCING GNOME.

(An untouched enlargement from the original negative.)

THIS PICTURE AND THE EVEN MORE EXTRAORDINARY ONE OF THE FAIRIES ON PAGE 465 ARE THE TWO MOST ASTOUNDING PHOTOGRAPHS EVER PUBLISHED. HOW THEY WERE TAKEN IS FULLY DESCRIBED IN SIR A. CONAN DOYLE'S AMAZING ARTICLE.

(*See page* 466.)

Fairies Photographed

AN EPOCH-MAKING EVENT .... DESCRIBED BY A. CONAN DOYLE

SHOULD the incidents here narrated, and the photographs attached, hold their own against the criticism which they will excite, it is no exaggeration to say that they will mark an epoch in human thought. I put them and all the evidence before the public for examination and judgment. If I am myself asked whether I consider the case to be absolutely and finally proved, I should answer that in order to remove the last faint shadow of doubt I should wish to see the result repeated before a disinterested witness. At the same time, I recognize the difficulty of such a request, since rare results must be obtained when and how they can. But short of final and absolute proof, I consider, after carefully going into every possible source of error, that a strong *prima facie* case has been built up. The cry of "fake" is sure to be raised, and will make some impression upon those who have not had the opportunity of knowing the people concerned, or the place. On the photographic side every objection has been considered and adequately met. The pictures stand or fall together. Both are false, or both are true. All the circumstances point to the latter alternative, and yet in a matter involving so tremendous a new departure one needs overpowering evidence before one can say that there is no conceivable loophole for error.

It was about the month of May in this year that I received a letter from Miss Felicia Scatcherd, so well known in several departments of human thought, to the effect that two photographs of fairies had been taken in the North of England under circumstances which seemed to put fraud out of the question. The statement would have appealed to me at any time, but I happened at the moment to be collecting material for an article on fairies, now completed, and I had accumulated a surprising number of cases of people who claimed to be able to see these little creatures. The evidence was so complete and detailed, with such good names attached to it, that it was difficult to believe that it was false; but, being by nature of a somewhat sceptical turn, I felt that something closer was needed before I could feel personal conviction and assure myself that these were not thought-forms conjured up by the imagination or expectation of the seers. The rumour of the photographs interested me deeply, therefore, and following the matter up from one lady informant to another, I came at last upon Mr. Edward L. Gardner, who has been ever since my most efficient collaborator, to whom all credit is due. Mr. Gardner, it may be remarked, is a member of the Executive Committee of the Theosophical Society, and a well-known lecturer upon occult subjects.

He had not himself at that time mastered the whole case, but all he had he placed freely at my disposal. I had already seen prints of the photographs, but I was relieved to find that he had the actual negatives, and that it was from them, and not from the prints, that two expert photographers, especially Mr. Snelling, of 26, The Bridge, Wealdstone, Harrow, had already formed their conclusions in favour of the genuineness of the pictures. Mr. Gardner tells his own story presently, so I will simply say that at that period he had got into direct and friendly touch with the Carpenter family. We are compelled to use a pseudonym and to with-

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hold the exact address, for it is clear that their lives would be much interrupted by correspondence and callers if their identity were too clearly indicated. At the same time there would no doubt be no objection to any small committee of inquiry verifying the facts for themselves if this anonymity were respected. For the present, however, we shall simply call them the Carpenter family in the village of Dalesby, West Riding.

Some three years before, according to our information, the daughter and the niece of Mr. Carpenter, the former being sixteen and the other ten years of age, had taken the two photographs, the one in summer, the other in early autumn. The father was quite agnostic in the matter, but as his daughter claimed that she and her cousin when they were together continually saw fairies in the wood and had come to be on familiar and friendly terms with them, he entrusted her with one plate in his camera. The result was the picture of the dancing elves, which considerably amazed the father when he developed the film that evening. The little girl looking across at her playmate, to intimate that the time had come to press the button, is Alice, the niece, while the older girl, who was taken some months later with the quaint gnome, is Iris, the daughter. The story ran that the girls were so excited in the evening that one pressed her way into the small dark-room in which the father was about to develop, and that as she saw the forms of the fairies showing through the solution she cried out to the other girl, who was palpitating outside the door: "Oh, Alice, Alice, the fairies are on the plate—they are on the plate!" It was indeed a triumph for the children, who had been smiled at, as so many children are smiled at, by an incredulous world for stating what their own senses have actually recorded.

The father holds a position of trust in connection with some local factory, and the family are well known and respected. That they are cultivated is shown by the fact that Mr. Gardner's advances towards them were made more easy because Mrs. Carpenter was a reader of theosophical teachings and had gained spiritual good from them. A correspondence had arisen and all their letters were frank and honest, professing some amazement at the stir which the affair seemed likely to produce.

THUS the matter stood after my meeting with Mr. Gardner, but it was clear that this was not enough. We must get closer to the facts. The negatives were taken round to Kodak, Ltd., where two experts were unable to find any flaw, but refused to testify to the genuineness of them, in view of some possible trap. An amateur photographer of experience refused to accept them on the ground of the elaborate and Parisian coiffure of the little ladies. Another photographic company, which it would be cruel to name, declared that the background consisted of theatrical properties, and that therefore the picture was a worthless fake. I leaned heavily upon Mr. Snelling's whole-hearted endorsement, quoted later in this article, and also consoled myself by the broad view that if the local conditions were as reported, which we proposed to test, then it was surely impossible that a little village with an amateur photographer could have the plant and the skill to turn out a fake which could not be detected by the best experts in London.

In the course of our investigations we had an interesting example of the power and also of the limits of psychic knowledge. A friend who was a medium and had a control in whom he had faith was allowed to examine the prints. His report, or rather that of his control, was that there was reason to fear a fake as he saw the negative being tampered with by a fair man, short, with his hair brushed back, in a room filled with all sorts of cameras and other queer machines and devices. This was, as a matter of fact, a fairly accurate description of Mr. Snelling and his surroundings, who had, as will be shown, prepared a second negative from the precious original.

The matter being in this state, Mr. Gardner volunteered to go up at once and report—an expedition which I should have wished to share had it not been for the pressure of work before my approaching departure for Australia. Mr. Gardner's report is here appended:—

5, Craven Road,
Harlesden, N.W.10.
July 29th, 1920.

FAIRY PHOTOGRAPHS: REPORT BY E. L. GARDNER.

IT was early in this year, 1920, that I heard from a friend of photographs of fairies having been successfully taken in the North of England. I made some inquiries, and these led to prints being sent to me with the names and address of the children who were said to have taken them. The correspondence that followed seemed so innocent and promising that I begged the loan of the actual negatives—and two quarter-plates came by post a few days after. One was a fairly clear one, the other much under-exposed.

The negatives proved to be truly astonishing photographs indeed, for there was no sign of double exposure nor anything other than ordinary straightforward work. I cycled over to Harrow to consult an expert

ALICE AND THE FAIRIES.

ALICE STANDING BEHIND THE BANKS OF THE BECK, WITH FAIRIES DANCING BEFORE HER. SHE IS LOOKING ACROSS AT HER PLAYMATE IRIS, TO INTIMATE THAT THE TIME HAD COME TO TAKE THE PHOTOGRAPH.

(An untouched enlargement from the original negative.)

photographer of thirty years' practical experience whom I knew I could trust for a sound opinion. Without any explanation I passed the plates over and asked what he thought of them. After examining the "fairies" negative carefully, exclamations began: "This is the most extraordinary thing I've ever seen"—"Single exposure!"—"Figures have moved!"—"Why, it's a genuine photograph! Where ever did it come from?"

I need hardly add that enlargements were made and subjected to searching examination—without any modification of opinion. The immediate upshot was that a "positive" was taken from each negative, that the originals might be preserved carefully untouched, and then new negatives were prepared and intensified to serve as better printing mediums. The originals are just as received and in my keeping now. Some good prints and lantern slides were soon prepared.

In May I used the slides, with others, to illustrate a lecture given in the Mortimer Hall, London, and this aroused considerable interest, largely because of these pictures and their story. A week or so later I received a letter from Sir A. Conan Doyle asking for information concerning them, some report, I understood, having reached him from a mutual friend. A meeting with Sir Arthur followed, and the outcome was that I agreed to hasten my proposed personal investigation into the origin of the photographs, and carry this through at once instead of waiting till September, when I should be in the North on other matters.

In consequence, to-day, July 29th, I am just back in London from one of the most interesting and surprising excursions that it has ever been my fortune to make!

We had time, before I went, to obtain opinions on the original negatives from other expert photographers, and one or two of these were adverse rather than favourable. Not that any would say positively that the photographs were faked, but two did claim that they *could* produce the same class of negative by studio work involving painted

models, etc., and it was suggested further that the little girl in the two pictures was standing behind a table draped right round with dark cloth, and that the toad-stools were mounted on sticks, which the girl's hand was not there when nothing was questionable and so on. All of this had its weight, and though I went North with as little bias one way or the other as possible, I felt quite prepared to find that a personal investigation would disclose some evidence of fakery.

The lengthy journey completed, I reached a distant old-world village in Yorkshire, found the house and were cordially received. Mrs. C. and her daughter E. (the girl as shown playing with the gnome) were both at home to meet me, and Mr. C. the father, came in shortly afterwards.

Iris Carpenter in 1920, standing by the tree shown in the frontispiece—where she played with the gnome three years before.

Several of the questions raised by the photographs were answered almost as a matter of course as I walked from the house. I was exploring a charming little valley, directly at the rear, with a stream of water running through, where the children had been accustomed to see and play with the fairies. I found the bank behind which the child, with her shoes and stockings off as shown as standing; toad-stools exactly as in the photograph were about in plenty; quite as big and heavy-looking. And the girl's hand? Why, she lovingly made me promise not to say much about it, or to be very long! I stood on the spots shown and easily identified every feature. Then, in course of hearing all that one could learn about the affair, I gathered the following, which, for the sake of conciseness, I set out below:—

Camera used: "The Ilkley" quarter-plate.
Plates: Imperial Rapid.
Fairies photo: July, 1920. Day bright but cool, windy. About 5 p.m.
Distance: 4 feet. Time: 1-25th second exposure.
Gnome photo: September, 1917. Day bright but cool. About 4 p.m. Distance: 4 feet. Time: 1-25th second.

I was fifteen years old, her cousin A. was ten years. Other photographs were attempted, but proved partial failures, and plates were run low.

Coloring. The plant or grass, pink mixed, black were in the wings shown in the photo, which are very pale in the original. The gnome is described as seeming to be in black pants, reddish-brown jersey, and red pointed cap. She was counting the pages, having them in her left hand, and was just stepping up on to E.'s knee when A. snapped him.

A. the visiting cousin, went away soon after and I says they must be together to "take photographs." Fortunately they will meet in a few weeks' time, and they promise me to try and get some more. I added she would very much like to send me one of a fairy flying.

Mr. C.'s testimony was clear and decisive. His daughter had pleased to be allowed to use the camera. At first he demurred, but afterwards, after dinner one Saturday, he put just one plate in the slide and gave it to the girls. They returned in less than an hour and begged him to develop the plate as I had "taken a photograph." He did so, with, to him, the bewildering result shown in the print of the fairies.

Mrs. C. says she remembers quite well that the girls were only away from the house a short time, before they brought the camera back.

Extraordinary and amazing as these photographs may appear, I am quite convinced of their utter genuineness as indeed would everyone be who had the same evidence of transparent honesty and simplicity that I had. I am adding nothing by way of explanations or theories of my own, though the need for two people, preferably children, to carry through the photography, in order to assist in the

strengthening of the etheric bodies. Beyond this I prefer to leave the above statement as a plain, unvarnished narrative of my connection with the incidents.

I need only add that no attempt appears ever to have been made by the family to make these photographs public, and whatever has been done in that direction locally has not been pressed by any of them, nor has there been any money payment in connection with them.

EDWARD L. GARDNER.

Mr. E. L. Gardner standing behind the bank on which Alice is seen leaning in the photograph below.

I MAY add as a footnote to Mr. Gardner's report that the girl informed him in conversation that she had no power of any sort over the actions of the fairies, and that the way to "'tice them," as she called it, was to sit passively with her mind quietly turned in that direction. Then, when faint stirrings or movements in the distance heralded their presence, to beckon towards them and show that they were welcome. It was Iris who pointed out the pipes of the gnome, which we had both taken as being the markings of the moth-like under-wing. She added that if there was not too much rustling in the wood it was possible to hear the very faint and high sound of the pipes. To the objections of photographers that the fairy figures show quite different shadows to those of the human, our answer is that psychoplasm, as the etheric protoplasm has been named, has a faint luminosity of its own, which would largely modify shadows.

To the very clear and, as I think, entirely convincing report of Mr. Gardner's let me add the exact words which Mr. Snelling, the expert photographer, allows us to use. Mr. Snelling has shown great strength of mind, and rendered signal service to psychic study, by taking a strong line, and putting his professional reputation as an expert upon the scales. He has had a varied connection of over thirty years with the Autotype Company and Illingworth's large photographic factory, and has himself turned out some beautiful work of every kind of natural and artificial studio studies. He laughs at the idea that any expert in England could deceive him with a faked photograph. "These two negatives," he says, "are entirely genuine, unfaked photographs of single exposure, open-air work, show movement in the fairy figures, and there is no trace whatever of studio work involving card or paper models, dark backgrounds, painted figures, etc. In my opinion they are both straight untouched pictures."

Alice leaning on the bank on which the fairies were dancing, as shown in the photograph on page 465.

A second independent opinion is equally clear as to the genuine character of the photographs, founded upon a large experience of practical photography.

There is our case, fortified by pictures of the places which the unhappy critic has declared to be theatrical properties. How well we know that type of critic in all our psychic work, though it is not always possible to at once show his absurdity to other people.

I WILL now make a few comments upon the two pictures, which I have studied long and earnestly with a high-power lens.

One fact of interest is this presence of a double pipe—the very sort which the ancients associated with fauns and naiads—in each picture. But if pipes, why not everything else? Does it not suggest a complete range of utensils and instruments for their own life? Their clothing is substantial enough. It seems to me that with fuller knowledge and with fresh means of vision these people are destined to become just as solid and real as the Eskimos. There is an ornamental rim to the pipe of the elves which shows that the graces of art are not unknown among them. And what joy is in the complete abandon of their little graceful figures as they let themselves go in the dance! They may have their shadows and trials as we have, but at least there is a great gladness manifest in this demonstration of their life.

A second general observation is that the elves are a compound of the human and the butterfly, while the gnome has more of the moth. This may be merely the result of under-exposure of the negative and dullness of the weather. Perhaps the little gnome is really of the same tribe, but represents an elderly male, while the elves are romping young women. Most observers of fairy life have reported, however, that there are separate species, varying very much in size, appearance, and locality—the wood fairy, the water fairy, the fairy of the plains, etc.

Another point is that the two upheld hands of the elves seen under a high power do not appear to be human, nor does the left foot of the figure capering upon the right. The hands seem furred at the edges and the fingers to be in a solid mass. This also may be due to movement and position, but it is curious that both hands give the same impression. It is notable also that the one figure which is without wings is the one which is sinking into the herbage.

Can these be thought-forms? The fact that they are so like our conventional idea of fairies is in favour of the idea. But if they move rapidly, have musical instruments and so forth, then it is impossible to talk of "thought-forms," a term which suggests something vague and intangible. In a sense we are all thought-forms, since we can only be perceived through the senses, but these little figures would seem to have an objective reality, as we have ourselves, even if their vibrations should prove to be such that it takes either psychic power or a sensitive plate to record them. If they are conventional it may be that fairies have really been seen in every generation, and so some correct description of them has been retained.

THERE is one point of Mr. Gardner's investigation which should be mentioned. It had come to our knowledge that Iris could draw, and had actually at one time done some designs for a jeweller. This naturally demanded caution, though the girl's own frank nature is, I understand, a sufficient guarantee for those who know her. Mr. Gardner, however, tested her powers of drawing, and found that, while she could do landscapes cleverly, the fairy figures which she had attempted, in imitation of those she had seen, were entirely uninspired, and bore no possible resemblance to those in the photograph. Another point which may be commended to the careful critic with a strong lens is that the apparent pencilled face at the side of the figure on the right is really only the edge of her hair, and not, as might appear, a drawn profile.

I must confess that after months of thought I am unable to get the true bearings of this event. One or two consequences are obvious. The experiences of children will be taken more seriously. Cameras will be forthcoming. Other well-authenticated cases will come along. These little folk who appear to be our neighbours, with only some small difference of vibration to separate us, will become familiar. The thought of them, even when unseen, will add a charm to every brook and valley and give romantic interest to every country walk. The recognition of their existence will jolt the material twentieth-century mind out of its heavy ruts in the mud, and will make it admit that there is a glamour and a mystery to life. Having discovered this, the world will not find it so difficult to accept that spiritual message supported by physical facts which has already been so convincingly put before it. All this I see, but there may be much more. When Columbus knelt in prayer upon the edge of America, what prophetic eye saw all that a new continent might do to affect the destinies of the world? We also seem to be on the edge of a new continent, separated not by oceans but by subtle and surmountable psychic conditions. I look at the prospect with awe. May those little creatures suffer from the contact and some Las Casas bewail their ruin! If so, it would be an evil day when the world defined their existence. But there is a guiding hand in the affairs of man, and we can but trust and follow.

Mr. Cray's Adventures

By

E. PHILLIPS OPPENHEIM

Illustrated by S. ABBEY

No. 2
The Two Philanthropists

AFTER two theatres and a music-hall on three consecutive nights, Mr. Joseph P. Cray and his daughter Sara decided to spend a quiet evening. They dined in the restaurant at the Milan, and afterwards selected two comfortable easy-chairs in the lounge. They watched the people for some time in silence. Mr. Cray in particular was a little *distrait*.

"Dad, I believe you're planning something," Sara remarked, as she lit her second cigarette.

"Not guilty," her father assured her.

"Then tell me just what you were thinking of?" she insisted.

Mr. Cray removed the cigar from his lips.

"I was just wondering," he confessed, "whether it would be possible to combine a little harmless excitement with a certain measure of—er—pecuniary benefit."

"But you don't want money, dad?"

Mr. Cray coughed.

"I'm not qualifying for the poor-house yet awhile," he admitted; "but at the same time, if there were shekels about, I should be a willing collector."

"Business is all right over in the States, isn't it?" she inquired.

"Booming," Mr. Cray acknowledged. "There's more money coming to me over there than I should care to think about spending, but it's like this, Sara. If I should be cabling for supplies just now your stepmother would be wise to the fact that I've quit France. She's a busy woman, but she might take it into her head to take a quick trip over."

"Good gracious, dad, don't suggest such a thing!" Sara exclaimed hastily. "You can have all the money you want from me."

"Nothing doing, my dear," her father assured her. "I'm a bad hand at borrowing. On the other hand, it would certainly add a little spice to any little adventure that might come along if I were able to supply my immediate necessities out of it."

Sara glanced through the glass partitioning at the opulent-looking crowd who dined, at the women in the lounge with their profusion of jewellery, the men, many of them with the hard, acquisitive expression of the day-by-day City man.

"There's plenty of money about, dad," she observed.

Mr. Cray thrust his hands deep into his trousers pockets and rubbed two half-crowns together.

"Sure!" he murmured. "Just a touch of inspiration's all that's needed."

Sara left him for a while, a few minutes later, to go to her room. She was staying at the hotel whilst her house in Charles Street was being renovated. Mr. Cray exchanged his cigarette for a fat cigar and ruminated.

Towards him down the broad carpeted way came Mr. Sinclair Smith, erstwhile of the Stock Exchange, and the Honourable Charles Frinton, of no occupation. Mr. Sinclair Smith was of florid complexion, with

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a tight mouth, narrow eyes, and an embonpoint righteously earned. The Honourable Charles Frinton, whose capacity for enjoying the good things of the world was a trifle in excess of his companion's, was as thin and pale as a man may be. He, too, however, possessed that slight narrowing of the eyes and indrawn lips which betoken the professional money-getter. They were, in fact, birds of a feather.

"It seems a pity," the Honourable Charles Frinton sighed, as they looked around for a seat, "that we should be spending money on one another, Sinny."

"Your fault," was the terse reply. "The supply of mugs up West seems to be running out."

Arm in arm, they slowly approached the easy-chair in which Mr. Cray was seated. Frinton pinched his companion's elbow.

"There's the type I should like to get hold of," he said, enviously. "Easy, benevolent, opulent. Why can't you drop a few of these into the bag, Sinny?"

"Shut up, you fool!" was the muttered reply. "Can't you see he thinks he knows us?"

MR. CRAY'S welcoming smile was the bland expression of the lonely and gregarious man.

"Say, I'm not mistaken, am I?" he said, as the two men came to a standstill before him. "Met you about two years ago, sir," he went on, addressing Sinclair Smith, "at the American Bar with some of the boys. We had one or two together. Sit down, gentlemen," Mr. Cray continued, without waiting for any reply. "My daughter's chair, that, but we'll get another when she returns. I remember now," he went on, reminiscently, "it was the night before I put on my uniform."

"I remember perfectly," Mr. Sinclair Smith acknowledged, shaking hands. "Permit me to introduce my friend, the Honourable Charles Frinton—Mr.—er—dear me, I had your name on the tip of my tongue just now."

"Cray," was the prompt response—"Mr. Joseph P. Cray."

"So you've been serving, sir?" Frinton observed, after they had settled down.

"American Y.M.C.A., sir," Mr. Cray confided; "a most uncomfortable uniform for a man of my figure, and at times a very miserable job, but I'm through with it. I took off my uniform less than a week ago. I went right into that little Paradise of a bar, and I drank my first cocktail for twelve months. Gee! I can feel the glow of it now!"

"You mean that you were on the water-wagon, as I believe your country people call it, for all that time?" Sinclair Smith inquired.

Mr. Cray was the epitome of stout and contented virtue.

"Not one drop of hard liquor passed my lips all the time I wore Uncle Sam's uniform," he declared.

Mr. Sinclair Smith summoned a waiter.

"An appreciative Englishman," he announced, "is going to offer you as much as you can drink of the best brandy in London."

As much as Mr. Cray could drink was a pretty tall order, as his host was presently to discover. The acquaintance, however, proceeded by leaps and bounds, and when Sara presently returned she found her father in his element. He rose to his feet with expansive pride.

"Gentlemen," he said, "I'd have you shake hands with my daughter, Lady Sittingbourne — Mr. Sinclair Smith — the Honourable Charles Frinton. Gentlemen I met here, dear, before I went to France."

The little ceremony was pleasantly performed. Mr. Frinton, as became his position, inaugurated the conversation.

"Any relation to Sir George Sittingbourne in the Blues?" he asked, deferentially.

"My husband," Sara explained. "He was wounded in '15, you know, and became military A.D.C. at Washington. He's out there now."

Secure in his temporary absence, Frinton magnified his slight acquaintance with Sara's husband into an intimate friendship. The little party soon became on the best of terms. Long after Sara's retirement for the night they finished the evening in Mr. Cray's sitting-room. When they parted even the hard-headed Frinton, and Sinclair Smith, a past-master in the art of avoiding drink, were incapable.

"See you 'morrow, old sport," Frinton declared, standing on one leg and balancing himself against the door as he shook hands with their host.

"If you don't look me up in the City, we all meet here at one o'clock," Mr. Sinclair Smith said, all in one breath.

Mr. Cray watched them on their tortuous way towards the lift, waved his hand in farewell, returned to his easy-chair, and helped himself to a final whisky and soda.

"Smart chaps, very, and good company," he ruminated; "but they take their liquor poorly for Englishmen."

LUNCHEON that next day was a gay and festive meal. Sara was amiable and brilliant. She spoke of City finance with the bated breath of an ignoramus, and she was perfectly prepared to accept her two hosts as prototypes of its genius. Once or twice the thought of what George would have said if he

"'Gentlemen,' he said, 'I'd have you shake hands with my daughter, Lady Sittingbourne.'"

had seen her in such company troubled her slightly, but on the whole she reflected that he belonged to a different side of her life, and that she was really only indulging for a very brief period that unquenched love of adventure in which she had revelled during her younger days.

"I wish dad would do something in the City while he's over here," she observed, with a little sigh. "Why don't you, dad? You know you always have what you call a flutter in Wall Street when you're in New York."

Mr. Cray smiled.

"It's not so easy to get on to anything worth taking an interest in over this side," he remarked. "Besides, I don't understand the English share market."

THE moment appeared to have arrived for which Mr. Sinclair Smith and the Honourable Charles Frinton had been marking time.

"Do you think your father would really like a little flutter, Lady Sittingbourne?" the latter asked. "Not a big affair, mind, but a thousand or two profit certain—perhaps a little more later on."

Mr. Sinclair Smith laid down his knife and fork.

"Charlie," he exclaimed, "you're not——"

"Yes, I am! Why not?" his friend interrupted, gazing admiringly into Sara's eyes. "Corton's no pal of mine, and I never gave him a word of encouragement."

"But I did," Mr. Sinclair Smith confessed, doubtfully. "I promised to meet him to-night and let him know how far we could go."

"You can tell him the whole thing's off," the other declared, ruthlessly; "that is to say, if Mr. Cray here fancies the proposition."

"Say, gentlemen, put me wise about this," that gentleman begged, eagerly.

Mr. Sinclair Smith shrugged his shoulders.

"Mr. Cray," he said, "you're a very good fellow, and I quite share Frinton's admiration for your charming daughter, but as a rule, to be perfectly frank with you, we reserve our little side-shows for our older friends, especially when the plums are sticking out. However, Frinton's said the word and I won't go back on him. Ever heard of the Idabo Rubber Plantations?"

"We're not great on rubber over the other side," Mr. Cray replied, "but I do just know that the Idabo is a sound concern."

"Ten thousand of the new issue are coming on the market this week," Mr. Sinclair Smith confided. "I don't know how you manage these things over on the other side, but the directors don't want the market disturbed, and they're handing them out in big blocks. Frinton and I have five thousand each. There's another five thousand to be bought for prompt cash."

"And the price?"

"Thirty-seven and sixpence," Sinclair replied. "You can see what they stand on the market in this morning's paper. Forty-one offered."

"I don't quite get the hang of this," Mr. Cray confessed. "Just why are you offering these shares at three-and-sixpence less than the market value?"

"Because the directors don't want the market price disturbed," Mr. Sinclair Smith explained. "They've taken nearly all the new issue themselves. These are just a few over which they've been handing out to their friends. If you take this five thousand you'll have to pay prompt cash for them, but they'll stand you in a profit on to-day's price of over eight hundred. On the other hand, we shouldn't expect you to put them on the market, except in very small lots, for the next fortnight."

"And supposing they go down in the meantime?" Sara asked.

Mr. Frinton smiled.

"Your father can get all the information about Idabos he wants to," he suggested; "but as a matter of fact, if you like a little gamble yourself, Lady Sittingbourne, I'll bet you five hundred that Idabos are higher sooner than lower in a month's time."

"This sounds good to me," Mr. Cray confessed. "I'll have a look at the tape presently."

"That's right, no hurry," Mr. Frinton said. "Sinny, you're host. I think another bottle of this Château Yquem. And, Lady Sittingbourne, we really ought to apologize for talking shop."

"Indeed you needn't," Sara protested. "As a matter of fact, it is my fault entirely. It is nice of you to help dad to make a little money."

"Perhaps I wasn't thinking altogether about your father," the Honourable Charles Frinton ventured.

"It isn't money, of course," Sara went on. "Dad's got plenty of that. But it does give him something to do and think about. Men are so much better when their thoughts are occupied, don't you think so?"

"That depends," the young man replied, with an impressive sigh. "Sometimes a man's thoughts are rather a hindrance to his day's work."

Sara laughed gaily.

"You London men are terrible," she said.

"There's only one fault about us," Frinton declared. "We're too impressionable."

Sara laughed softly and looked down at her plate. It was indeed a gala luncheon for the Honourable Charles Frinton and Mr. Sinclair Smith.

AFTER luncheon they adjourned to Mr. Cray's sitting-room, where their host, with some pride, produced a small portable typewriter, stuck in a sheet of paper, and hammered out the following document :—

I, Joseph P. Cray, and we, Charles Frinton and William Sinclair Smith, agree severally, the former to purchase and the latter to sell, shares to the value of ten thousand pounds in the——

"How do you spell Idabo ?" Mr. Cray inquired.

"I haven't any carbons," Mr. Cray replied, "but I guess my cheque will do for your half. I'll just put the document in the drawer here until we clean the deal up."

"That will be quite satisfactory," Mr. Sinclair Smith said ; "but there's one rather important matter, Mr. Cray—when will it be convenient for you to clear this business up ? Frinton and I paid for our shares yesterday."

"As soon as I've had time to walk down to the Bank of England I guess things can be arranged," Mr. Cray promised. "I've a

"He thrust the piece of paper once more back into the typewriter and, adjusting it carefully, struck a single letter."

"I-d-a-b-o," Mr. Frinton said.

—Idabo Rubber Plantations. Payment in full to be made in cash on production of the share certificates, and two hundred and fifty pounds (£250) deposit to be paid by the said Joseph P. Cray on the signature of this document.

"You Americans know how to tie a thing up tight," Mr. Sinclair Smith remarked, laughing, as he signed his name.

"Something of a lawyer, aren't you, Mr. Cray ?" the Honourable Charles Frinton added, as he too appended his signature. "Do we want a copy of this ?"

credit here for pretty well as much as I should care to draw."

Their eyes rested upon him almost hungrily. Both for a moment had the same feeling—they had touched him too lightly, and alas ! in all probability they would have no other opportunity.

"What are you doing this evening, Charles ?" Mr. Sinclair Smith asked his companion in an undertone.

"Dining at Doncaster House," the other confided. "The Duchess—well, you understand."

Mr. Sinclair Smith nodded.

"I promised Joel, too—but there, Charles,

I think we ought to clear this business up. You know what Sir William said—that they might ask us for these shares back again if they weren't cleared up within a few hours. Could you see us between six and seven, Mr. Cray?"

"Sure!" that gentleman assented, rising from the table where he had been writing a cheque. "Here's your two hundred and fifty pounds. I'll get down to the Bank presently, and we'll all meet and have a cocktail together, eh? You must let me come down and see you in the City some day, Mr. Smith. I guess I'd be interested in studying some of your English methods."

"We'll give you a City man's lunch any day later in the week," Mr. Sinclair Smith promised, as he thrust the cheque into his waistcoat pocket.

"I hope we'll see your charming daughter again," the Honourable Charles Frinton remarked, as they said good-bye.

"Why not fix up a little dinner for this evening?" Mr. Cray invited, hospitably. "Sara'd be tickled to death. We might go to a music-hall afterwards."

The Honourable Charles Frinton looked the picture of woe.

"Alas!" he regretted, "not this evening. I have some relatives who are apt to be a little exacting."

"And I have an appointment with a very big financial man," his friend confided; "a deal in property, I don't mind telling you, that runs into a couple of millions or thereabouts."

"Say, you boys do handle the stuff!" Mr. Cray said, admiringly. "Till six o'clock, then, and good luck to you. I'll pay my respects to the Old Lady of Threadneedle Street."

Left to himself, Mr. Cray turned the key in the lock, lest by some chance one of his guests should return. Then he thrust the piece of paper once more back into the typewriter and, adjusting it carefully, struck a single letter. Afterwards he placed the document in his pocket, caught up his stick and hat, and sauntered out into the Strand. His journey Citywards, however, extended no farther east than Somerset House.

AFTER the *mise-en-scène* was set that evening Mr. Cray's heart misgave him.

"I guess you'd better not figure in this show, Sara," he said to his daughter, who was occupying an easy-chair in his sitting-room. "There's no telling how those two skunks may pan out. They're soft stuff to look at, but you never can tell."

Sara showed no signs of moving.

"Dad," she reminded him, "I've been with you in some tougher corners than you'll find yourself in this evening. And you know what I told you. If I can't gratify this morbid craving of mine for a few last glimpses into Bohemia, I shall never settle down and make George a respectable wife. Besides, you'll want me to mix the cocktails, and I want to see whether Mr. Frinton will remain the perfect gentleman."

"I guess there'll be more tears than blows," said Mr. Cray. "Stay where you are if you're set upon it."

"I intend to," Sara declared sweetly.

The two visitors were very punctual. They arrived, indeed, five minutes before the time. Mr. Sinclair Smith made profuse apologies.

"The fact of the matter is," he explained, "both Mr. Frinton here and I are hard pushed this evening. We shall just have to finish our little piece of business as quickly as we can, and if you, sir," he added, turning to Mr. Cray, "and your daughter will honour us by dining at the Ritz to-morrow night, we shall be charmed. We can then celebrate this little occasion more adequately."

"It's a date, sure," Mr. Cray promised, exuberantly. "No need to keep you gentlemen over this little business, either. I've a packet of notes here, and I see you've got the shares there. Spread them out on the table, sir. Let's have a look at them."

Mr. Sinclair Smith reverently produced a thick pile of brand-new copperplate share certificates. They were very clean, very artistically executed, and evidently of recent issue. Mr. Cray, with the notes bulging from his pocket, began to count. The two men stood over him.

"One hundred, two hundred, three hundred, four hundred——" Mr. Cray stopped short.

"What's wrong?" Mr. Sinclair Smith asked sharply, trying to keep the note of anxiety from his voice.

"It's this durned spelling again," Mr. Cray explained, with puckered brows. "These share certificates seem to be spelt without the final 'r.'"

"That's the way the plantation's spelt," was the sharp reply. "I told you so when you made out the agreement."

Mr. Cray stopped his counting and felt in his pocket.

"I don't seem, somehow, to remember that," he said, pensively.

He spread out the agreement, with its Somerset House stamp, upon the table. The faces of the two men who stared at the spot to which Mr. Cray's fat forefinger pointed were a study. Without a doubt, the name of the rubber plantation there was "Idabor," and below it were their signatures.

"It was spelt 'Idabo' when I signed," Frinton exclaimed at last.

"I'll swear it," Mr. Sinclair Smith echoed. "The agreement's been tampered with."

"Then both men forgot the presence of a lady and began to talk. Sara leaned back in her chair with the air of a pleased and gratified audience."

Mr. Cray returned it reflectively to his pocket.

"I guess you two gentlemen don't know how to spell your own property," he said, pleasantly. "Now I'll just put you both wise as to what made me so plumb positive. It's this report from my stockbroker."

He held a sheet of paper before him and read out its contents :—

IDABOR RUBBER PLANTATIONS.

Capital three hundred thousand pounds. A fine commercial undertaking. Full particulars in Rubber handbook, sent herewith. Present price of shares round about forty-one. Should recommend purchase.

IDABO RUBBER GROUNDS.

A derelict concern, nominal capital sixty thousand pounds, with a large number of unissued founders' shares. Shares not quoted on Exchange, as property considered valueless.

"I got that from my stockbroker this afternoon," Mr. Cray explained. "That's why I knew for certain that it was Idabor shares and not Idabo we were dealing in."

Mr. Frinton had turned very pale. He sank suddenly into an unoccupied chair. For the purposes of any further controversy he was down and out. Mr. Sinclair Smith made as good a showing as could reasonably have been expected.

"Mr. Cray," he confessed, "the shares we meant to plant you with were the Idabo Rubber Shares. Frinton here and I were had with them—cost us a cool ten thousand. We were the mugs that time. We made up our minds to pass them on if we could to another mug. We selected you."

"That seems to have been a little unfortunate," Mr. Cray observed, with a smile.

"You've tumbled to it, and there's nothing more doing," Sinclair Smith continued. "Here's your two hundred and fifty pounds deposit," he added, throwing the cheque upon the table. "Come on, Frinton."

"Stop a minute," Mr. Cray called out.

The two men, who were well on their way to the door, paused.

"I can't see my way through quite to the end of this little matter yet," Mr. Cray explained. "By this document here you seem bound to deliver to me five thousand Idabor shares at thirty-seven and six, to-day's price forty-one, profit to me eight hundred and seventy-five pounds."

Mr. Sinclair Smith stared at Mr. Cray for several moments. Once he opened his lips, glanced at Sara, and closed them again. Mr. Frinton's rejoinder was on the weak side.

"Those were Idabos, and you know it," he muttered.

Mr. Cray shook his head.

"Idabos doesn't sound reasonable," he protested, gently. "They could be bought by the thousand for fourpence a share, and you were proposing to sell them to me for thirty-seven and sixpence. I feel sure that no one would believe it possible that you two gentlemen would make such a suggestion as that. Idabors my agreement says, and Idabors I want—or eight hundred and seventy-five pounds."

Then both men forgot the presence of a lady and began to talk. Sara leaned back in her chair with the air of a pleased and gratified audience. Mr. Cray, too, showed not the slightest signs of wishing to interrupt the dual stream of eloquent abuse. When the two men were silent at last through lack of breath, he made his first remark.

"I am not a bargainer, gentlemen," he said. "There seems to have been a little mutual misunderstanding in this deal, but the fact remains that I am entitled to the delivery of five thousand Idabor shares from you at thirty-seven and sixpence, or the profit on them—eight hundred and seventy-five pounds. I am not a hard man. I will take five hundred pounds cash."

A secondary burst of eloquence was less original but more abusive.

"You're a damned sharper!" Mr. Frinton wound up.

"A low confidence-trick man," Mr. Sinclair Smith finished, with a glance at Sara, "you and your——"

Mr. Cray took a step forward. Mr. Sinclair Smith did not finish his sentence. He took a step backwards towards the door. Mr. Cray threw it open and stood there. He was still smiling, but his smile had qualities.

"At nine o'clock," he said, "my solicitor is looking me up for a friendly chat. A cheque for five hundred pounds any time before that hour will see you through this trouble. You'll find the lift round to the right. So long, boys!"

Mr. Cray returned with beaming face.

"Sara," he said, looking towards the sideboard, "give her a shake."

AT a quarter to nine that evening, while Mr. Cray and his daughter were dining at a corner table in the grill-room, a note was brought to him. He tore open the envelope. Inside was a cheque for five hundred pounds. He thrust it into his waistcoat pocket, produced the one which he had written for two hundred and fifty pounds, and passed it to Sara.

"Your share, my dear," he said. "Let us drink the health of those two philanthropists."

"You dear, clever father!" she murmured, enthusiastically.

(Another story in this series will appear next month.)

From Chrysalis to Butterfly

From Chrysalis to Butterfly.

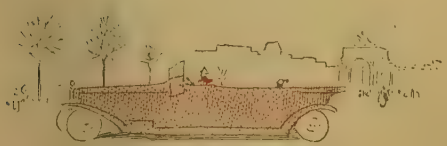
A BOMB is exploded in the quiet Vicarage of the old-fashioned remote village of Slowcombe. This is no less than a gushing invitation from a distant cousin—the gay and fashionable Lady Betty Modish—asking the Vicar's eighteen-year-old daughter Priscilla to spend the Christmas Holidays in London. The Vicar is filled with misgiving, Priscilla with hope and Mrs. Vicar—remembering certain glimpses of gaiety in her own youth—with joy.

Of course, Mrs. Vicar's wishes prevail: Priscilla is overjoyed, and the Vicarage becomes a buzzing hive of industry. The village dressmaker is called in to assist Mrs. Vicar and her one maid-servant in preparing Priscilla's finery. They are determined that she shall be worthily equipped.

The younger members of the family are filled with envy as she sets out for the station in her Sunday frock, with her one trunk filled with local finery. The last good-byes are said and Priscilla finds herself *en route* for London.

Alone on the platform at Paddington, she begins to feel lost, but is suddenly saluted by a very imposing personage in uniform (a Guards' officer at least, she thinks), but he is only Lady Betty's chauffeur.

He ceremoniously conveys Priscilla to a very large and shiny Rolls-Royce—and feeling very small in the big car she is whirled to Mayfair.



Later on she feels smaller still when she observes the peculiar expressions flit across the face of Suzette, Lady Betty's French maid, who unpacks her one trunk.

From Chrysalis to Butterfly.

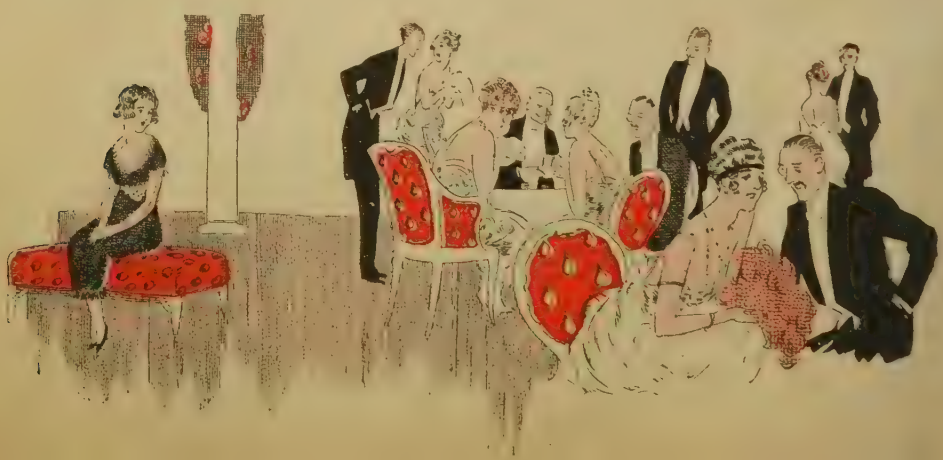
The poor little Chrysalis realizes her incompleteness when, in the drawing-room, she finds a glittering throng awaiting her.

Despite the warmth of Lady Betty's greeting, a glance at the women assembled makes her realize only too clearly that the village dressmaker's conception of a dinner gown is just a trifle wide of the mark.

For Lady Betty is out when Priscilla arrives, so she has tea in her own bedroom and, assisted with haughty condescension by Suzette, she prepares for the ordeal of facing her very smart cousin and her very smart guests at her first dinner away from home.

She is silent and shy. Various men, during the evening, good-naturedly try to entertain her, but her replies are monosyllabic, so in the end poor little Priscilla finds herself alone.

Inwardly she longs for frocks like those others, and at the same time she inwardly wonders what the Vicar would say if he saw some of them.

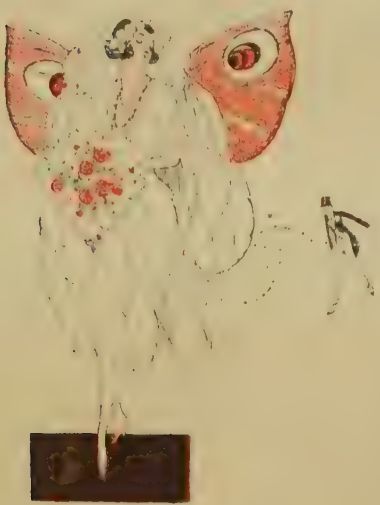


As though realizing Priscilla's unspoken thoughts, the very next morning Lady Betty whirls her off to Madame Selini's *salon* in Bond Street, and a new and ravishing world is opened up before her.

They lunch at Claridge's and go to a *Thé Dansant* As our Chrysalis watches the wondrous motions of the modern Jazz she fully realizes how her education has been neglected, but again Lady Betty comes to the rescue and carries her to the elect dance *salon* of the famous Madame Ospovoski. This gifted lady agrees to perfect Priscilla in ten lessons.

After a week of studious application and earnest observation Priscilla can Jazz expertly, can wear a modern evening gown without blushing, can smoke a

Russian cigarette in a long holder, and can *almost* swallow a *crème de menthe* without coughing. By carefully watching Lady Betty's methods she has even ventured on a mild flirtation.



But the night of Lady Betty's Christmas Ball arrives all too quickly, and though the Chrysalis longs to try her wings, she still feels herself hopelessly unfashionable and countrified.

But thanks to her shy and timid manners, plus her fetching frock, she is a huge success. Her unspoiled complexion and her charming air of an *ingénue* have all the appeal of novelty. The other women are neglected. Priscilla is *the* girl of the evening, the Belle of the Ball. The dashing Guardsman of her dreams appears and is conquered. Disdaining other people's wives, he devotes the evening to Priscilla, and begs every dance he can. She holds the centre of the stage and is supremely happy.

He asks her the all-important question—appropriately under the mistletoe. Her hesitation is brief. His dashing manner and his charming eyes are only a little less eloquent than his Mayfair mansion and his eleven thousand a year. She thinks of the Slowcombe Vicarage and decides swiftly—and the perfect Butterfly unfolds her wings.

Handsome Harry

by

W. W. JACOBS

Illustrated by
ROBIN

"HE'S a bit of all right," said Mr. Joe Gossett, interrupting his description of the new foreman with a large wedge of bread and cheese.

His sister sniffed. "Fancy a man being called 'Handsome Harry'! Pff!"

"He can't 'elp what people call him," said Mr. Gossett, "and if you was to see him you'd understand it. Five foot eleven, dark-blue eyes, good teeth, and the finest short beard I ever saw in my life. All brown and gold it is. How he's escaped, I don't know."

"Escaped!" repeated his sister, in a shrewish voice.

Mr. Gossett nodded.

"Poor dear!" said Miss Gossett, quivering.

"After him like flies round a treacle-pot," continued her brother. "I've been with 'im and I ought to know."

"P'raps *you* was the attraction," said his mother, archly.

Mr. Gossett sniffed, but not so loudly as his sister.

"I don't hold with handsome men," said Mrs. Gossett, shaking her head. "Nobody could say that I married your pore father for his good looks. His——"

"Where did I get mine from, then?" interrupted Miss Gossett.

"My side of the family," replied her mother, modestly. "You was a Smithson and Joe was a Gossett."

"If the Smithsons hadn't got more good looks than what Mabel has——" began the indignant Mr. Gossett.

"What a pair we should make," said Miss Gossett, with a simper, "me and Handsome Harry! Bring him in one evening and let's have a look at him, Joe. What's his other name? If it isn't nice I sha'n't have him."

"His name's Cook," said her brother, "and as for you catching him, why, he'd laugh at the idea."

"Bring him in and let's have a look at him," repeated his sister, "then perhaps I'll ask Florrie Adams in one evening. I'll tell her you'll be out."

"Oh, don't tease him," said Mrs. Gossett.

"Tease him?" said the irritated Mr. Gossett, pushing his chair away and rising. "Don't make me laugh. It's a pity Mabel ain't got more sense, that's all."

"Pity you ain't a Smithson," said Miss Gossett, as he went outside for his hat. "You might have a chance then."

HE closed the street door with a bang that sent a revivifying draught of fresh air through the small house, and, somewhat ruffled in spirit, set off at a smart pace down the road. The subject of Miss Adams was a sore one, the slavish admiration of some months having yielded, so far, nothing but amusement in return. A brotherly desire to give Miss Gossett some idea of the pangs of unrequited affection sent his thoughts again to the fascinations of Handsome Harry.

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He turned the matter over in his mind for a day or two, and resolved at last to introduce his friend casually. If Miss Gossett were taken at a disadvantage, so much the better; he was not going to give her the chance of "window-dressing."

His trouble was wasted. The night he introduced Mr. Cook his sister had just returned from the local cinema accompanied by Miss Adams, and the first impression the visitor received was of fine clothes and languorous perfumes. In the best manner of the highest circles both girls seemed to sit aloof, with little interests of their own. Little intimate jests and giggles testified to their complete absorption.

"Good show?" inquired Mr. Gossett, in an interval.

"Pretty fair," said his sister, languidly. "Leonard Firebrace was on."

"He's a darling," said Miss Adams, clasping her hands enthusiastically.

Messrs. Gossett and Cook said "*H'm!*" to each other.

"Supposed to be the handsomest man on the films," said Miss Gossett.

Mr. Cook stroked his short, well-trimmed beard and gave a finer point to the ends of his moustache. "What's he like?" he inquired, in an indulgent voice.

"Like a Greek god," replied Miss Gossett, quoting from a story in her favourite periodical.

"Straight nose, well-shaped mouth, and wonderful eyes," explained Miss Adams.

"You only see men like that at the Pictures, and in dreams," said her friend, with a sigh. "Think of his teeth!"

Miss Adams thought of them, and sighed in her turn. Mr. Gossett and Mr. Cook stirred restlessly. The latter even ventured on a cough; a cough more than tinged with criticism. Under the calm, straight gaze of Miss Gossett it repeated itself—with a different note, and subsided.

"I must say," remarked that lady, turning to her friend, "that I like to see good looks in a fellow. Joe!"

"Hallo!" replied her brother.

"Who is that good-looking man you were talking about the other day? One of your foremen, or something?"

Mr. Gossett gasped, and sent a wireless message with his eyebrows.

"Man you call Pretty Bertie," continued his sister, ignoring it. "No, that isn't it."

"Have you gone dotty?" inquired the embarrassed Mr. Gossett, in a gruff voice.

"Or was it Lovely Charlie?" said his

"Its only one of Joe's larks" said Miss Gossett-turning to the goggle-eyed Mr Cook

sister, musing. "No, I remember—Handsome Harry. That's the name. Why don't you bring him in one day and let's have a look at him?"

"Do," urged Miss Adams.

"If he's only half as good-looking as what you say he is we might fall in love with him," said Miss Gossett.

Her brother eyed her helplessly, while Mr. Cook, with an air of painful surprise, sat awaiting the inevitable explanation.

"That's him," said Mr. Gossett at last, with a jerk of the head. "Where are your eyes?"

"Him? Who?" inquired his sister.

"Handsome Harry," replied her brother. "I told you his name was Cook."

Miss Gossett threw back her head and laughed till the tears came. "Don't be so silly," she said, wiping her eyes.

"How can you?" said Miss Adams.

"It's only one of Joe's larks," said Miss Gossett, turning to the goggle-eyed Mr. Cook. "You mustn't take any notice of him. The idea of him pretending you are Handsome Harry."

"As if we shouldn't have noticed it," murmured Miss Adams.

Mr. Cook turned his troubled gaze upon his friend in a mute appeal for help, but Mr. Gossett's face was as bewildered as his own.

"It's a name that some of them have given him," said the latter at last, in a surly voice.

"How rude of them!" said his sister, severely. "I shouldn't take any notice of them if I were you, Mr. Cook. But I must say I should like to see the real one."

MR. COOK gave it up. It struck him that the explanation might lie in defective eyesight, and he recalled the story of a man who took to spectacles, and ran away from his wife a week afterwards.

A feeling of regret that so pretty a girl might have to take to glasses imparted a tenderness to his glance that was by no means wasted. Miss Gossett, lowering her eyes at first under the onslaught, ventured after a time to raise them and meet it. The gentle timidity of her glance did much to restore Mr. Cook's self-esteem. In the language of the eyes long practice had made him almost perfect, and his gaze became so ardent and so confident that Miss Gossett was moved to speech.

"What's the matter?" she demanded.

"Matter?" repeated Mr. Cook, in surprise.

"You seemed to be staring in a funny sort of way," said the girl. "You don't have fits, do you?"

"No," said Mr. Cook, shortly.

"Funny look he had," said Miss Gossett, turning to the others. "I didn't like it at all. I suppose you haven't got anything in your eye, Mr. Cook? I'm a dab at taking things out."

Mr. Cook hesitated, and was lost. "I did get something in coming along," he murmured, "but I thought it was out."

He smiled with content as the ministering angel leaned over him and prised up the lid with her finger. Then he winced and drew back his head.

"Keep still," said the girl; "I'm not hurting you."

"Not much," corrected the victim. "*Ow!*"

"It's funny men can't bear a little bit of pain," observed Miss Gossett, continuing her explorations. "There! I nearly had it then."

"Perhaps it'll work itself out," suggested Mr. Cook, wincing again.

"I'll have it out if you'll only keep still," said Miss Gossett. "Anybody would think I was hurting you."

Mr. Cook drew his head back with a sudden exclamation of pain. "What have you got?" he inquired, hoarsely; "a scrubbing brush?"

"Don't be silly," said the girl, as the sufferer clapped a handkerchief to his streaming eyes.

"It's out," he said, in a voice which endeavoured in vain to express surprise and gratitude. "It's out."

"I knew I could do it," said Miss Gossett. "I could have done it sooner if you hadn't flinched so much."

"My eyes are very tender," said Mr. Cook. "That's what I thought a few minutes

Miss Gossett's laugh ended abruptly.

ago," said the girl, " but perhaps you'll grow out of it. Let's hope so."

" It's never too late to mend," observed Miss Adams, oracularly.

MR. COOK arose in dignified silence and, with a final dab at his eye, restored his handkerchief to his pocket and announced that he must be going. At Miss Adams's suggestion, Mr. Gossett, rising with some unwillingness, offered to accompany him.

" Me and Mabel want to have a little chat," said Miss Adams, in explanation.

" All by ourselves," added Miss Gossett.

Agreeable to this strange lack of taste on the part of the ladies the gentlemen withdrew, Mr. Cook, to whom this sort of treatment was absolutely new, walking out of the house like a man in a dream. Memories of countless conquests stirred in his brain but yielded no satisfaction.

" Very off-handish, ain't she ? " he said at last.

" She learns it from Mabel," said his friend. " They're as thick as two thieves."

" I mean your sister," said Mr. Cook.

" Oh ! " replied Mr. Gossett. " Her ! "

" She's very nice-looking," said Mr. Cook, after a long pause.

" She seems to make people think so," said the fond brother. " How she does it, I don't know. I'm as good a judge as most men, but I can't see it."

" Well, you can take it from me," said the other, impressively, " that she is about the best-looking girl I have ever seen. She's your step-sister, isn't she ? "

" Step-sister ? " repeated Mr. Gossett, with surprising vehemence. " No, of course she ain't. What ever put that into your head ? "

" I don't know," said Mr. Cook, hurriedly. " I spoke without thinking. Of course there's a great likeness, anybody could see that."

The indignant Mr. Gossett received the assurance with a grunt, and listened in amazed silence while his friend explained to him in enraptured terms the manifold perfections of his sister.

" But you hadn't seen her till an hour ago," he protested.

" I shall have to make up for lost time," said Mr. Cook, earnestly. " What about to-morrow night ? "

Mr. Gossett said there was nothing about it, and declined in the most unmistakable terms to have anything to do with the affair.

" She'd only make fun of you," he said, severely. " You ought to have seen her face when she was messing about with your eye."

Mr. Cook said he had seen it, and smacked his lips.

" And she'll do worse than that if you don't let 'er alone," continued Mr. Gossett. " Why, there was one silly fellow that used to come after her, and she led 'im such a dance that he went away and joined the Army."

" Very good place for him," said Mr.

Cook, approvingly. "Besides, we must have soldiers."

"When I took you round I thought you would have learnt 'er a lesson," said his friend; "instead of that you're worse than any of 'em. It makes *me* look such a fool. I expect she's talking about you now and laughing fit to kill herself."

"She's got a pretty laugh," said the other, with a tender smile. "I could listen to it all day."

HE heard it a night or two later, when, failing his utmost efforts to obtain an invitation from Mr. Gossett, he called without one, apparently for the purpose of telling Miss Gossett that it was a fine evening, but that a little rain would do good. After which effort he sat and watched Miss Gossett gurgling foolishly into her handkerchief.

"Don't take no notice of her," said Mrs. Gossett, somewhat disturbed.

"I like it," replied Mr. Cook, simply.

"Sounds silly to me," said Mrs. Gossett, shaking her head at her daughter.

"That's why I like it," said Mr. Cook, floundering. "I like silly people."

Miss Gossett's laughter ended abruptly. "Did you come to see Joe?" she inquired, with some austerity.

Mr. Cook shook his head.

"What did you come for, then?"

The visitor looked imploringly at Mrs. Gossett, but seeing no help there turned to the daughter. "I came to tell you my eye is all right now," he said, slowly. "I thought you'd like to know."

Miss Gossett gazed at him, deep in thought. "Will you be able to see your way home with it?" she said at last, in a soft voice.

The visitor became thoughtful in his turn. "Perhaps—perhaps it would be safer if somebody—somebody came with me," he murmured.

Miss Gossett nodded. "Ye-es," she said, softly. "Yes, I think it would. Can you give me a couple of minutes?"

Mr. Cook, flushing with joy, said that he could, and, hardly able to believe in his good fortune, bestowed a half-wink upon Mrs. Gossett as her daughter left the room.

"Gone up to put her hat on?" he inquired, in a low voice.

"P'r'aps," said the surprised Mrs. Gossett, "and p'r'aps not," she added. "If I don't expect her to do a thing, she does it, and if I expect her to do a thing she don't do it. That's Mabel."

Mr. Cook shook his head gently in sympathy. Then he prepared to rise as Miss Gossett entered the room followed by a small and extremely dirty youth in patched knickerbockers.

"This is Tommy Burrows, from next door," she said.

Mr. Cook nodded—and waited.

"By good luck, he happened to be in," continued the girl. "This is the poor gentleman, Tommy, and if you lead him safe home he will give you a shilling. You had better hold his sleeve. And mind how you cross the roads."

She stood smiling benevolently as Master Burrows, in pursuance of his instructions, took the dazed and speechless Mr. Cook by the sleeve and piloted him carefully from the room. At the street-door he paused and strove to collect his scattered faculties.

"Good-bye," said Miss Gossett, brightly.

The unfortunate gasped at her, and then, obedient to a tug at his sleeve, moved slowly off. The laugh that he had so much admired was heard again, but some of its savour seemed to have departed. It was clear that he had lost the first two rounds, and, with a faint hope that Tommy's mother might have something to say to Miss Gossett on the subject, he took that hapless youth ten miles for the shilling.

The laugh that he had so much admired was heard again but some of its savour seemed to have departed

BY the next morning he had recovered his spirits and the vitriolic scorn of Joe Gossett passed him harmlessly by. It appeared that Miss Gossett had persisted in regarding her brother as privy to the visit

Mr Gosseff brought back the withered remains next day

and chose to include him as a victim of her cleverness.

"That's all right," said Mr. Cook, equably. "You shall have the laugh of her by and by."

"When?" demanded the unbeliever.

"When I marry her," was the reply.

Mr. Gossett turned and regarded his friend in amazement. "Have you gone silly or what?" he inquired, huskily.

"There's nothing to go silly about," responded Mr. Cook. "I've thought all along I should be caught some time. She's got me hard and fast, and the funny thing is, I don't mind. I like it."

"But she won't have you," objected the staring Mr. Gossett. "She wouldn't look at you."

"You tell her I'm going to marry her," said Mr. Cook. "Tell her I'm going to marry her, and the sooner she makes up her mind to it the better."

Mr. Gossett took the message. The one he brought back next day lost nothing in transit.

"So there you are," he said, grinning. "She says she wouldn't have you if you were the only man in the world."

She ate the "chocs" with one hand while I held the other

"She couldn't," said the philosophical Mr. Cook; "there'd be too many after me."

HE called the next evening and, Miss Gossett being out, left a little bunch of flowers he had hidden beneath his coat. Mr. Gossett brought back the withered remains next day. A large and expensive box of chocolates left two nights later was returned empty, but any comfort Mr. Cook might have derived from the fact vanished when he heard that it had accompanied Mr. Gossett and Miss Adams to the cinema.

"She ate the chocs with one hand while I held the other," explained Mr. Gossett. "Try Mabel with another box to-night, old man."

Mr. Cook, intent upon what he now considered would be a long campaign, made no reply. Despite his utmost efforts he was unable to obtain speech with Miss Gossett, and a letter, sent through the post, was returned marked, "Opened by mistake." Assailed by doubts, only his looking-glass convinced him that he held a winning hand. He called again, and spent three hours of mutual boredom with Mrs. Gossett, while Miss Gossett sat upstairs in her bedroom, blaspheming.

"It's the only way to treat 'em," he said to Mr. Gossett, when that gentleman remonstrated. "Show 'em you ain't afraid of 'em and they come to heel."

"And what about my poor mother?" demanded his friend, hotly. "She 'ad you all last evening, talking about the weather, and Mabel all breakfast time talking about hairdressers' blocks and tailors' dummies. Don't you come again."

"Not till next time," said the other, calmly.

As a matter of good-feeling and policy combined he decided to let a few days elapse

Only his looking glass convinced him that he held a winning hand

Spent three hours of mutual boredom with Mrs. Gossett

before calling again. A slight swelling and soreness in the neck attributed to a tooth which had been troubling him for some time led to a still further delay. The distortion of face was especially trying to a man of his appearance, and, after enduring for two days the glances of his fellow-workers and the ribaldries of Mr. Gossett, he stayed away from work.

He sat at home next day with his head wrapped in a shawl. Dainties, as conceived by his landlady for an invalid, remained untouched. And he was in the depths of misery when the door opened and Mr. Gossett stepped blithely in.

"Jee-rusalem!" said that gentleman.

Mr. Cook tried to smile, and Mr. Gossett retreated a couple of paces, and placed his hand on the door-knob.

"Why don't you 'ave the tooth out?" he demanded.

"When—swelling—goes down," croaked the invalid.

Mr. Gossett looked at him and hesitated. "Mabel wants you to come to supper," he said at last. "She sent me to ask you."

There was a long pause.

"You—told—her—'bout this," said Mr. Cook, "and she wants—to make—fun of me."

Mr. Gossett coughed.

"All right," said the other, "I'll come. I don't mind if she does laugh."

Fortunately, as Mr. Gossett observed, it was getting dark, and Mr. Cook's features attracted no attention. A little natural reluctance to enter the sitting-room gave way before a hearty push from his companion.

"It is good of you to come," said Miss Gossett, her lips trembling.

"You — asked me," said Mr. Cook, speaking slowly and painfully from one side of his mouth. "And I came—because—you thought — I wouldn't."

"Don't take no notice of her," said Mrs. Gossett. "For shame, Mabel," she added.

"I ca-can't help it," said her daughter, wiping her eyes. "He—looks so plump and well-fed."

"He looks ill," said Mrs. Gossett, severely. "Have you seen a doctor?"

Mr. Cook said he didn't believe in doctors, and, turning a deaf ear to the misbehaviour of Miss Gossett, took the seat next to her at the supper-table and sat gloomily eyeing food he was unable to eat. By an effort he managed to sip a little beer, and, at Miss Gossett's earnest entreaty, ate a small quantity of rice pudding from a salt-spoon. The fact that she fed him with the first two mouthfuls atoned for much.

"Pity Florrie couldn't come to supper," said Miss Gossett, turning to her brother.

Enduring the ribaldries of Mr. Gossett

"She'll be here soon, I expect," he answered. "She 'ad an appointment, but she said she'd be sure to come if she could. There she is, I think."

Rapid steps paused at the door; followed by a knock which Mr. Gossett hastened to answer. Voices sounded in the narrow passage.

"Come in, Florrie," cried Miss Gossett. "Handsome Harry is here."

Miss Adams came in, with a broad smile revealing white teeth. Then her eyes dilated, and uttering a piercing shriek she fell back into the passage.

"Don't be silly," cried the highly-gratified Miss Gossett; "he's quite harmless."

There was a smothered exclamation from Miss Adams, followed by the sound of the opening of the street-door.

"It's too bad," said Mrs. Gossett. "Mabel, I won't have it."

"He ought to be shut up," she exclaimed in piercing tones, "or boiled," she added. "If I catch 'em, I'll never speak to you again!"

"Catch what?" demanded the harassed Mr. Gossett.

The reply set the party in the parlour tingling.

"*Mumps*," she said, viciously. "As if you didn't know."

The grating of Miss Gossett's chair as she pushed it back broke the silence.

"Mumps!" she wailed; "mumps! and I've been sitting next to him."

"And feeding him," added Mr. Cook, gloomily. "Well! well! Fancy—its being mumps—all the time. And at—my age too. I thought——"

He finished speaking to an empty room. The ladies were upstairs, and, judging by the noise, somewhat perturbed. The voice of Mr. Gossett—from the landing—bade him begone.

HE returned to work nearly three weeks later. Mr. Gossett was not there, and the voice of envy declared that five other gentlemen were also staying at home in sinful luxury with the mumps.

He went round to call the same evening, and asked for news of Joe.

"They've both got it," said Mrs. Gossett, in a tired voice. "Poor Mabel, you ought to see her."

"I will," said Mr. Cook, stepping inside. "Can you send her down?"

Mrs. Gossett smiled faintly. "She wouldn't let anybody see her for a thousand pounds," she declared. "I don't think her face will ever get right again. It's like a piller."

Mr. Cook, walking to the foot of the stairs, raised his voice and called loudly upon the name of Miss Gossett. A door opened softly and a strange, cracked voice told him to go away.

"I want to see you," he answered.

"Go away," repeated the girl.

"I came to see you when I had 'em," said Mr. Cook. "Now I dare you to come down and see me. If you haven't got the pluck, say so."

at Miss Gossett's earnest entreaty, ate a small quantity of rice pudding from a salt spoon.

"Go away—you brute!" said the voice.

"Don't be a coward," urged Mr. Cook. "Surely you ain't going to be outdone by me. I'll wait in the parlour for you. Be a sportsman."

He waited five minutes. A halting step sounded from the stairs, and a little later the door opened and a disfigured and indignant Miss Gossett entered the room and stood glowering at him.

"Poor old thing," he said, tenderly.

"You gave me this," she said, fiercely.

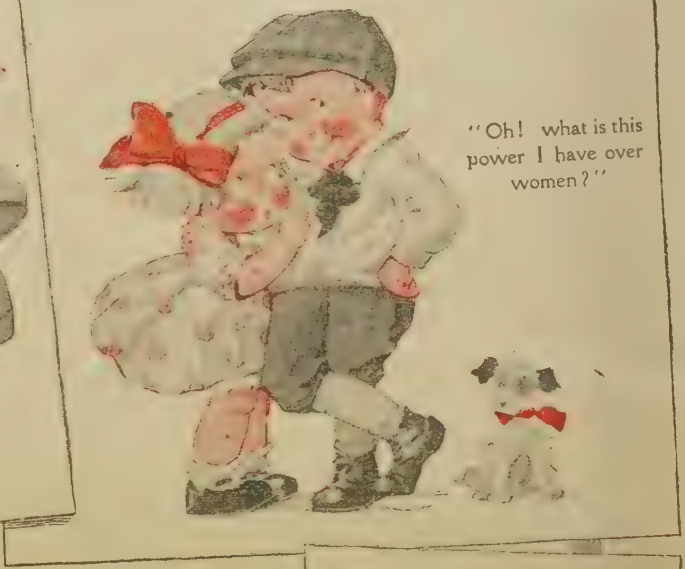
Mr. Cook shook his head. "You took it," he corrected, gently. He placed his arm suddenly around her waist, and, choosing her forehead as the point of least resistance, kissed it ardently.

"It'll soon go away," he said, cheerfully. "In about ten days' time we shall be the best-looking couple in the neighbourhood."

OUT OF MISCHIEF!

The Age of Innocence!

Full of ginger.



"Oh! what is this power I have over women?"

"You'll find out who's boss if I start howling."

"You know, I kind of like you now I see you close."

The MAN WITH HIS HAND IN HIS POCKET

H. C. McNEILE ("SAPPER")

ILLUSTRATED BY CHAS. CROMBIE

I.

"I'LL take one card."

With the expressionless face of the born gambler, the man glanced at his draw, and laid the five cards face downwards on the table in front of him. Not a muscle twitched as he leaned back in his chair, his right hand thrust deep in his trouser-pocket. So had he played all through the evening, losing with steady persistence and losing highly: losing, in fact, as only a man can lose who is holding good cards at poker when somebody else is holding a little better. And now he had drawn one card to three of a kind, and it had come off. There were four eights in the hand in front of him, and they had made their appearance just in time. For Billy Merton knew only too well that the chips by his side represented everything that was left out of a matter of twenty thousand pounds. The play was high at the Ultima Thule Club in Bond Street.

A fat man opposite him had also taken one card, and Merton's keen eye noticed the twitching of his fingers as he laid his cards down. A bad gambler, but having a run of the most infernal luck, this fat fellow. So much the better: he'd probably got a straight at least—possibly a full house. Fours could be ruled out: the fat man was the type who would always discard two if he held three of a kind.

They were playing without a limit, and at length Billy Merton leaned across the table.

"My chips are finished, I'm afraid," he remarked, with a faint drawl. "Will you take paper till the end of the hand?"

"Certainly," said the fat man, in a voice which shook a little.

"Good!" With his left hand Merton scrawled an I O U, quite regardless of the spectators who had collected at the rumour of big play which flies round with such mysterious rapidity. He might have been playing halfpenny nap for all the interest he apparently took in the game.

The fat man saw him at five thousand pounds—which was just four thousand more than Billy Merton possessed in the world. And the fat man laid down a straight flush.

"You're lucky, sir," said Merton, with a genial smile, lighting a cigarette with a perfectly steady hand. "I'll just cash a cheque and get you the chips."

A faint murmur of admiration passed round the onlookers: this clean-shaven, steady-eyed man with the whimsical smile was a gambler after their own hearts. Then in a couple of minutes he was forgotten: players at the Ultima Thule are, in the main, a selfish brand of individual. Possibly had they suspected the utter hopelessness seething behind the impassive face of the man who stood by the buffet eating a caviare sandwich and drinking a glass of champagne,

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they might not have forgotten him so quickly. But they did not suspect: Billy Merton saw to that. It was only as he turned to help himself to another sandwich that a look of despair came into his eyes. No one could see: the mask could slip for a moment. Ahead lay ruin and disgrace. The cheque could not be met next morning: there was no human possibility of raising the money in the time. And to the descendant of a long race of gamblers there was something peculiarly abhorrent in failing over a debt of honour.

"Bad luck—that last hand of yours, sir." A thick-set, middle-aged man beside him was making a careful study of the various edibles. "Just came up in time to see the showdown."

"I have known the cards run better," answered Merton, curtly.

"I can see that you're a born gambler," continued the man, "and being one myself—though not in this particular line—one has, if one may say so, a sort of fellow-feeling." He was munching a sandwich and staring round the room as he spoke. "The nerve, sir—the nerve required to stake everything on the turn of a card—on the rise or fall of a market—by Heaven, it's the only thing in life!"

Almost against his will—for he was in no mood for talking—Billy Merton smiled.

"Your game is the Stock Exchange, is it?"

"It is, sir—and there's no game like it in the world. Even when ruin stares you in the face, you've still got till next settling day. You've still got a chance."

"I wish the same thing applied here," said Merton, with a hard laugh.

"As bad as that, is it?" remarked the other, sympathetically. "Never mind: the luck will change. I guess there have been times when I've felt like stealing or forging or doing any other blamed thing under the sun to put my hand on some ready money."

Merton smiled mirthlessly, and said nothing. The point of view coincided rather too unpleasantly with his own.

"And mark you, sir," continued the stranger, dogmatically, "I've got a greater respect for a man who wins through, by fair means if possible—but, if not, by foul—than for the weakling who goes down and out. The first, at any rate, is a *man*."

Again Merton smiled. "Leaving out the ethical side of your contention, sir," he remarked, "there are one or two small practical difficulties that occur to one's mind. It is sometimes as difficult to find the foul means as it is to find the fair. Burglary and forging rank high amongst the arts, I believe, which are not taught at most of the public schools."

The other man shrugged his shoulders contemptuously. "Of course you mustn't take me too literally. But"—he thumped an enormous fist into the open palm of his other hand—"there's always a way, sir, if you've got the nerve to take it. Nerve: that's the only thing that counts in this world. Without it—why, you can go and grow tomatoes in the country! Nerve, and the capability of seizing the right moment. With those two assets you come to the top and you stay there." For a moment or two he stared fixedly at the half-averted face of the younger man; then he gave a jovial laugh. "Anyway—if you start to recoup your fortunes with journalism—you needn't give those as the opinions of Paul Harker. Not that they aren't pretty widely known, but in this world one must pretend."

MERTON glanced at the speaker. So this was the celebrated Paul Harker, was it? What the devil was it he'd overheard at the club that afternoon about him? Not knowing him, at the time it had made no impression; now he recalled it hazily. Something to do with a woman. He frowned slightly as he tried to remember; then he gave a short laugh. What on earth did it matter? What did anything matter except that cursed cheque?

"Well, I'll say good night, Mr. Harker." He put down his empty glass. "It would take a mighty big journalistic scoop to put me straight—bigger even than your ideas on life."

"Which way are you going?"

"Half-Moon Street. I've got rooms there."

"I'll stroll with you. The atmosphere of this place is fierce."

In silence the two men got their coats and strolled into Bond Street. The theatres were just over, and a stream of cars were pouring westward with their loads of well-dressed, wealthy occupants. Life—life in London—for people with money! With a cynical smile Billy Merton lit a cigarette. It was what he had promised himself after years in the wilds.

He barely heard his companion's occasional remarks: it was just as they turned into Half-Moon Street that it struck Billy that Paul Harker had made some suggestion and was waiting for an answer.

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Harker," he said, apologetically, "but I'm afraid my mind was wandering. You were saying——"

"I was suggesting that if you've got nothing better to do you should come to my house in Curzon Street. My wife has a spiritualistic séance on. Starts at midnight. Come in and see the fun."

For a moment Billy hesitated. After all, why not? Anything was better than a

solitary contemplation of his own confounded foolishness.

"It's very good of you——" he began, but the other cut him short.

"There's always a way, sir, if you've got the nerve to take it!"

"Not at all. Only too pleased you can manage it."

"But won't your wife—— I mean, I'm a complete stranger." He paused doubtfully by the door of his rooms.

"My wife won't mind," answered Paul Harker, taking him by the arm. "Do you good, my dear fellow. Take your mind off."

It was really deuced good of this fellow Harker. Sympathy of a gambler for a gambler sort of idea. He could only hope that Mrs. Harker would see eye to eye with her husband.

"Here is the house, Mr. Merton. Come in." With a smile of welcome Paul Harker stood aside to let the younger man pass.

"I didn't know you knew my name, Mr. Harker," said Billy Merton, as a footman relieved him of his coat.

"I asked who you were at the Ultima Thule. Come on up and meet my wife." Then, be in a hoarse undertone just before they reached the room, he turned to Merton. "I don't know whether you believe in this stuff; but, for Heaven's sake, pretend to."

He gave a heavy wink, and Billy smiled. Undoubtedly Paul Harker was quite a pleasant fellow.

II.

THERE were six women in the room when they entered and one somewhat anæmic-looking man.

"Hope I'm not late, my dear," said Paul Harker, breezily, to a pale, delicate-looking woman who rose to meet them. "I've

brought a friend who is interested in these things. Mr. Merton—my wife."

Billy Merton bowed, and took a chair beside her.

"We hope for some very interesting results to-night, Mr. Merton," she remarked. "Professor Granger feels confident of getting a tangible materialization."

"Indeed!"

Mindful of his host's injunction, he nodded portentously. His ideas on what a tangible materialization was were of the vaguest: if it was anything like Professor Granger, he inwardly trusted the experiment would fail.

For a few minutes they continued to talk generalities: then Mrs. Harker rose and crossed to the Professor, leaving Merton to his own devices. With some interest he glanced round the room. Heavy black curtains hung over the windows and the door. The furniture was reduced to a minimum, the whole of the centre of the floor being empty. Around the walls were ranged easy chairs draped in some dark material: the carpet, thick and luxurious, was dark also. In fact, the whole room was sombre—sombre and silent.

CURIOUSLY he glanced at his companions. In one corner four of the women were talking in low, restrained tones, evidently impressed with the solemnity of the occasion, and involuntarily Merton smiled. They seemed so very earnest—and so very dull. Then he looked at the other woman who was standing by Paul Harker. She seemed of a different type—very far from being dull. Tall and perfectly proportioned, she was dressed in black, and as his eyes rested idly on the pair it struck him that his host found her far from dull also. And at that moment they both turned and looked at him.

It was the first time he had seen the woman's face, and he found himself staring foolishly at her. She was one of the most beautiful things he had ever seen—beautiful in a sensuous Eastern fashion—and Billy Merton suddenly realized that he was gaping at her like a callow schoolboy. Abruptly he looked away, annoyed with himself at his gaucherie, to find that he was not the only person who was interested in the lady. For his hostess, though ostensibly speaking to the Professor, was watching her husband's companion with a look on her face which left no doubt as to her feelings on the subject.

"So that's how the land lies, is it?" thought Merton; and the remark he had overheard at the club came back to him. He knew there had been a woman in it.

"Iris, I want you to meet Mr. Merton." His host's voice made him look up quickly. "Let me introduce you to Miss Sala."

Merton rose and bowed: on the instant the remark had returned to his memory.

"There will be a crash soon," a man had said, "with Harker and that Sala girl."

And now he was talking to the Sala girl, and deciding that if she was beautiful at a distance she was ten times more beautiful close to.

"No," he found himself saying, "I've not done much of this sort of thing in England, though I've seen a good deal of what the African native calls *ju-ju*."

"And it interests you?" Her voice was deep and very sweet.

"Very much," said Merton. "I'm most curious to see what is going to happen to-night."

For a moment the smile seemed to ripple over the surface of her eyes: then once more they were inscrutable.

"It's rather exciting if it comes off," she remarked, thoughtfully. "Everything is pitch-dark, of course, and then you hear sighs and groans, and sometimes a hand comes out and touches you."

"But do you really believe——" began Merton, incredulously.

"I don't believe—I know," said the girl, calmly. "Why, at one séance I attended a jade necklace I was wearing was wrenched off my neck. The fastening was broken, and all the beads rolled about the floor. And everyone had been bound in their chairs, Mr. Merton, before we started."

Billy nodded discreetly: it occurred to him that he had heard stories like that before.

"You hear something moving round the room," she continued, "something you know was not there at the beginning—and won't be there at the end. And sometimes it bumps against you, and then it goes on floundering and moving about the room. It sounds like a sack of potatoes being dragged about at times, and then it changes and you hear soft footfalls."

Again Billy nodded: he was prepared to listen indefinitely to this sort of stuff when the speaker was Iris Sala.

"It sounds more than rather exciting," he said, with a grin. "Let's hope we get the jolly old flounderer to-night."

For the moment his own trouble was forgotten: he was only conscious of a pleasurable sense of excitement. Not that he really believed in what the girl had said, any more than the average normal person believes in a haunted house. But even the most pronounced sceptic is conscious of a little thrill when he turns out the light in the bedroom which is popularly reputed to be the family ghost's special hunting-ground.

"I think it's very foolish of Mrs. Harker to wear those lovely pearls of hers." The

girl was speaking again, and Merton glanced at his hostess. He had not remarked them specially before, but now he noticed that Mrs. Harker had three long ropes of large, beautifully-matched pearls round her neck. "My jade beads didn't matter very much—though I lost half-a-dozen at least. But with those pearls—why, she might mislay a dozen if the rope was broken, and be none the wiser."

A jovial chuckle made Merton look up. Paul Harker was standing behind them, and he had evidently heard the girl's remark.

"I'm a Philistine, Iris. Forgive me. I don't somehow anticipate much danger to Rose's pearls."

"You're wrong, Mr. Harker," she said, gravely. "You've never seen a tangible materialization. I have—and I know."

"Anyway," he laughed, "there's no use attempting to ask her to take them off, because she won't. And incidentally it looks to me as if the worthy Professor was going to get busy. There's a wild look in his eye."

"Will you take your seats, please, ladies and gentlemen? The two gentlemen on opposite sides of the room. I thank you." In a mournful way he contemplated the circle from the centre of the floor. "I would point out to all of you," he continued, "that our experiment to-night is a difficult one, entailing the highest form of will-co-operation and mental effort. If we are successful, I can tell no more than you what form this materialization will take. But I must entreat of you to concentrate with all your power on the one main salient fact of producing a tangible thing: and I must beg of you most earnestly not, under any circumstances, to speak while the experiment is in progress. We will now put out the lights."

And the last thing Billy Merton was conscious of before the lights went out were Iris Sala's grey-green eyes fixed on him with an inscrutable, baffling look in them. Even in the darkness he seemed to see them: languorous, mocking, a little cynical. And there was something else—some other emotion which eluded him for the moment. It wasn't sorrow, though it seemed akin to sorrow; it was—yes, it was pity. He moved slightly in his chair, and nodded his head in the darkness. Pity—that was the other message in those wonderful eyes: and the thought brought him back to the reality of his own position.

Paul Harker must have told her, of course: told her that he'd been losing heavily, and she was sorry for him. Even to a millionaire like Harker five thousand pounds on a single hand of poker would seem fairly heavy; and to him—— He gave a mirthless little laugh, which called forth an instant rebuke from the Professor.

"Perfect silence, please."

BILLY MERTON lay back in his chair and closed his eyes. His brain was racing with the feverish activity of a worried man. If it had been anything else—anything but a gambling debt. Thank God! his father was dead, and would never know the disgrace of it; but there were quite a number of relations. They'd soon find out; things of that sort can't be kept dark. What a fool, what a damnable fool he'd been!

And it was at that moment that there came a soft bump on the floor, and he heard the woman in the next chair to him draw in her breath sharply.

For a while he stared rigidly into the darkness; then, with a slight frown, he let his body relax. He was in no mood for entertainments of this type: he wished now that he hadn't come. And yet it had been very decent of Harker suggesting it—very decent. Was there a possibility, he wondered—if he made a clean breast of the whole thing to his host—was there a possibility of him lending four thousand? It seemed the only hope, the bare chance of salvation. He'd ask him after this cursed séance was over. The worst that could happen would be a refusal. And supposing he didn't refuse? Supposing—— Billy drew in a deep breath at the mere thought.

Thump! thump! Perfectly clear and audible the sounds came from the centre of the room, bringing him back to the present, and he felt the back of his scalp begin to tingle. Of course, it was a trick; and yet he didn't somehow associate the Professor with a vulgar fraud. He had struck him as a well-meaning, conscientious man, who was badly in need of exercise and an outdoor life. Probably dyspeptic.

And if so—if it wasn't a trick—what was it that was now dragging itself about?

"Like a sack of potatoes." Iris Sala's words came back to him as he sat there motionless.

Suddenly he heard the Professor's voice, trembling a little with excitement:—

"Who are you? Speak!"

The noise ceased at once; only a long-drawn shuddering sigh came out of the darkness. Then after a minute or two the uncanny dragging noise commenced again: bump—slither—bump. He tried to locate it, but it seemed everywhere. At one moment it was close by, at another it sounded as if it was at the other side of the room.

It was devilish, it was horrible. He put a hand to his forehead; it was wet with sweat. He felt an insane desire to get up

from his chair and rush from the room: the only trouble was that he had forgotten the exact location of the door.

Besides, he might bump into the Thing on the way.

A frightened cry rang out, and Billy Merton half-rose in his chair. It was a woman's cry: probably the Thing had touched her. The bumping had ceased, he noticed: another noise had taken its place—a slight gurgling sound, accompanied by a quick beating on the floor, as if someone was drumming with their feet on the carpet. And after a while that ceased also. Silence, absolute and complete, reigned in the room for ten minutes or a quarter of an hour. The Thing had gone.

At length the Professor spoke.

"Are you still there?" There was no sound in answer. "Manifest yourself now if you are; otherwise the light will be turned up."

Still there was no sound, though the Professor waited a full minute before speaking again.

"With a cry Paul Harker sprang forward.

"Will you, please, turn up the light, Mr. Harker?"

"Certainly." Paul Harker's cheerful voice came from the other side of the room, as he rose to comply with the request. For a moment or two he fumbled with the switch;

'She's fainted. I'll get brandy.'"

then the room was once more flooded with light.

"A most satisfactory manifestation," began the Professor, only to stop with a look of dawning horror on his face. Scattered around Mrs. Harker's chair were scores of wonderful pearls. Sprawling over the arm of the chair was the unfortunate woman herself.

For a moment there was a stunned silence in the room; then with a cry Paul Harker sprang forward.

"She's fainted. I'll get brandy."

He dashed from the room, as two of the women, reassured by the words, went over to Mrs. Harker.

"I knew it was risky wearing those pearls," whispered Iris Sala in Billy's ear, but he hardly heard what she said. He was staring at the limp form of his hostess through narrowed lids, and suddenly he turned to the girl beside him.

"It's a doctor that's wanted, not brandy," he said, abruptly. "Where's the telephone?"

"In the hall," answered the girl.

He ran downstairs, passing Paul Harker on the way. For what seemed an eternity he stood by the instrument before he could get through. Then he returned to the room above.

"A doctor's coming at once," he announced breathlessly, and then he stopped dead—just inside the door.

Huddled together in a group at the end of the room were all the women—all save Iris Sala. She was standing by Mrs. Harker's chair, with Paul Harker on the other side.

"There is no need for a doctor, Mr. Merton," said Harker, in a terrible voice. "My wife is dead. And my wife has been murdered!"

"Murdered?" gasped Billy, mechanically.

"Murdered," repeated Harker. "Come and see."

Dazedly Billy walked towards him, to

stop and stare foolishly at the woman in the chair. For they had propped her up and laid her head back, and on her throat distinct and clear were the marks of a hand. The four fingers on one side, the thumb on the other, showed up red and angry in the bright light.

"She had a weak heart, Mr. Merton," continued Paul Harker, slowly. "Any sudden shock, such as a hand grasping her throat" —his voice shook a little—"would have been liable to kill her. And a hand *did* grasp her throat: the hand that tore off her pearls."

"My God!" muttered Billy. "It's ghastly—ghastly! Then that thing we heard must have—must have——"

"Must have murdered my wife, Mr. Merton. The question is—what was it we heard? I fear we shall find it difficult to persuade the police on the matter of a tangible materialization. They deal in more mundane causes."

AND at that moment Billy Merton understood. The relentless voice of the man, the strange look in the grey-green eyes of the girl—it seemed to be triumph now—cleared away the fog from his brain, leaving it ice-cold. He was as a man who suddenly sees a flaring notice DANGER, and realizes that there is peril ahead, though he knows not its exact form. And with men of the Merton stamp it is best to be careful at such moments.

"I see," he answered, slowly. "You mean that, regarded from the police point of view, the supposition will be that one of the people who were present during the séance tore the pearls from your wife's neck, and in doing so murdered her."

"Regarded from every point of view," corrected Paul Harker, harshly.

"Then under those circumstances," said Merton, grimly, "the police must be sent for at once."

With his hands in his pockets he was staring at Paul Harker, while from the other end of the room came an occasional sob from some overwrought woman.

The whole thing was like some horrible nightmare—bizarre, unreal—and the sudden arrival of the doctor came as a relief to everyone. Quickly he made his examination. Then he stood up.

"How did that happen?" he asked, gravely, staring at the marks on the dead woman's throat.

"That man did it!" roared Harker, unable to contain himself longer and pointing an accusing finger at Merton. "You vile scoundrel! you blackguard! you—you——"

"Steady, Mr. Harker!" cried the doctor sharply. "Am I to understand, sir, that you did this?" He turned in amazement to Merton.

"You are not," said Billy, evenly. "It's a damnable lie."

"I don't understand," remarked the doctor. "Will somebody kindly explain?"

It was Iris Sala who answered, and as she spoke the feeling that he was dreaming grew stronger in Billy Merton.

"We were having a séance, Doctor," she began, in her deep rich voice, "trying to get a tangible materialization. The room, of course, was in pitch-darkness, and after it was over and the lights were turned up we found that Mrs. Harker was—dead!"

Her voice faltered, and Harker lifted a grief-stricken face from beside his wife's chair.

"But what happened during the séance?" asked the doctor.

"We heard something moving about. A thing that bumped and slithered over the carpet."

"Pshaw!" snapped the doctor. "What I don't understand is why this gentleman should be accused of it."

"Because," cried Harker, getting up, "he's in desperate want of money. Look at this!" He fumbled in his pocket, and to Billy's amazement produced the cheque for four thousand he had written at the Ultima Thule. "I took this cheque to-night in exchange for one of my own—because I liked the look of you. Yes—you wicked villain—I liked the look of you; and I meant to do something for you. I brought him here, never dreaming—never thinking——" His voice broke again. "He saw my wife's pearls: was actually talking about them just before the séance started—and then when the light went out he must have snatched them off her neck. And in doing so you killed her. And to think I actually heard you doing the vile deed!"

"You deny this?" asked the doctor.

"Absolutely," returned Billy, grimly.

"I feel that it is partly my fault," said the girl, in a broken voice. "I never dreamed, of course, that this man was in want of money. And I told him a foolish story about how some jade beads I once had were snatched from my neck during a séance like this—by the thing that came. Of course—it wasn't true. It was a joke. But I told it just to frighten him. And I suppose he believed it, and thought he would do the same." She buried her face in her hands.

"Well, are any of the pearls missing? If so, where are they?" The doctor's question brought Paul Harker to his feet.

"I don't even know how many my dear wife had!" he cried.

"The point seems immaterial," said Billy, quietly. "Since I seem to be the object of

suspicion; I should be obliged if you would search me, Doctor."

With a shrug of his shoulders the doctor complied. Methodically he ran through every pocket; then he turned to Paul Harker.

"There are no pearls on this gentleman," he said, curtly.

"Ah, but he left the room. He left the room to telephone for you. He might have put them in his overcoat."

"Then we'll send for the overcoat," remarked the doctor, ringing the bell. "With your permission, that is, sir." He turned to Merton.

"By all means," said Billy. "Only I would like to state, should they be found there, that I am not the only person who has left the room since the tragedy. Mr. Harker has also been downstairs."

Paul Harker laughed wildly.

"Yes, I know. To get brandy. Before I knew——"

He paused as a footman opened the door.

"Bring this gentleman's overcoat," ordered the doctor, "up to this room. And be careful to see that nothing falls out of the pockets."

With one horrified glance at the motionless figure in the chair, the footman fled, returning almost immediately with the coat.

"This is your coat?" asked the doctor.

"It is," said Billy.

And then in a tense silence the doctor extracted twenty large pearls from different pockets.

"You murderer!" Paul Harker's low whispered words seemed to ring through the room, and with a little strangled gasp a woman fainted. The doctor's face, grim and accusing, was turned on Billy, as if demanding some explanation which he knew full well could not be given. And of all those present only Billy Merton himself seemed cool and calm, as, with his hands still in his pockets, he faced the ring of his accusers.

"What have you to say?" said the doctor, sternly.

"One thing—and one thing only," answered Billy. "I have read in fiction of diabolical plots: to-night I have met one in real life. But, as so often happens in fiction, one mistake is made, which leads to the undoing of the villain. And one mistake has been made to-night."

And now his eyes, merciless and stern, were fixed on Paul Harker, and he noticed with a certain grim amusement that a muscle in the millionaire's face was beginning to twitch.

"Mr. Harker is a man of nerve: he also believes in seizing the right moment. And to-night struck him as being the right moment."

"What are you talking about?" snarled Harker.

"For reasons best known to yourself, Mr. Harker"—he glanced from him to Iris Sala, from whose eyes the strange look of triumph had mysteriously vanished, leaving only fear—deadly, gripping fear—"you wished to get rid of your wife."

"It's a lie!" Paul Harker sprang forward, his fist raised to strike.

"You will doubtless have ample opportunity for proving it," continued Billy, imperturbably. "By a happy combination of circumstances, a suitable moment—the darkness of a séance—and a suitable motive—robbery—presented themselves to your hand. Acting according to your tradition, you took them. And as far as I can see, Mr. Harker, you would have been successful had you also selected a suitable person. Therein lay your one error."

"Am I to understand," said Harker, in a grating voice, "that you are accusing *me*—of murdering my wife? Why—you miserable cur——" He stopped, choking with anger.

"I make no such accusation," answered Billy. "All I state is that I didn't." He turned gravely to the doctor. "What was the cause of Mrs. Harker's death?"

"Heart failure—caused by partial strangulation with the hand."

"Which hand?"

The doctor looked at him quickly; then glanced once more at the dead woman.

"The right hand."

"You swear to that?"

"Undoubtedly I swear to it," said the doctor.

For the first time Billy Merton withdrew his right hand from his pocket, and held it out in front of him.

"The one mistake," he said, grimly.

The first, second, and third fingers were missing!

For a moment there was a deathly silence; then the doctor suddenly sprang forward.

"Stop him!" he roared.

But Paul Harker had already joined the woman he had foully killed, and in the air there hung the faint smell of burnt almonds. Prussic acid is quick.

AN hour later Billy Merton walked slowly along the deserted streets towards his rooms. The police had come and gone; everything in the room where the tragedy had taken place had duly passed before the searching eye of officialdom. Everything, that is, save one exhibit, and that reposed in Billy's pocket. And when a man has signed a cheque for four thousand pounds on a total bank balance of as many pence, his pocket is the best place for it.

Without Prejudice

by

ETHEL M. DELL

ILLUSTRATED BY W. R. S. STOTT

CHAPTER I.

SILLY SENTIMENT.

"IT'S TIME I set about making my own living," said Dot Burton.

She spoke resolutely, and her face was resolute also; its young lines were for the moment almost grim. She stood in the doorway of the stable, watching her brother rub down the animal he had just been riding. Behind her the rays of the Australian sun smote almost level, making of her fair hair a dazzling aureole of gold. The lashes of her blue eyes were tipped with gold also, but the brows above them were delicately dark. They were slightly drawn just then, as if she were considering a problem of considerable difficulty.

Jack Burton was frankly frowning over his task. It was quite evident that his sister's announcement was not a welcome one.

She continued after a moment, as he did not respond in words: "I am sure I could make a living, Jack. I'm not the 'new chum' I used to be, thanks to you. You've taught me a whole heap of things."

Jack glanced up for a second. "Aren't you happy here?" he said.

She eluded the question. "You've been awfully good to me, dear old boy. But really, you know, I think you've got burdens enough without me. In any case, it isn't fair that I should add to them."

Jack grunted. "It isn't fair that you should do more than half the work on the place and not be paid for it, you mean. You're quite right, it isn't."

"No, I don't mean that, Jack." Quite decidedly she contradicted him. "I don't mind work. I like to have my time filled. I love being useful. It isn't that at all. But all the same, you and Adela are quite complete without me. Before you were married it was different. I was necessary to you then. But I'm not now. And so——"

"Has Adela been saying that to you?"

Jack Burton straightened himself abruptly. His expression was almost fierce.

Dot laughed at sight of it. "No, Jack, no! Don't be so jumpy! Of course she hasn't. As if she would! She hasn't said a thing. But I know how she feels, and I should feel exactly the same in her place. Now do be sensible! You must see my point. I'm getting on, you know, Jack. I'm twenty-five. Just fancy! You've sheltered me quite long enough—too long, really. You must—you really must—let me go."

HE was looking at her squarely. "I can't prevent your going," he said, gruffly. "But it won't be with my consent—ever—or my approval. You'll go against my will—dead against it."

"Jack—darling!" She went to him impulsively and took him by the shoulders. "Now that isn't reasonable of you. It really isn't. You've got to take that back."

He looked at her moodily. "I sha'n't take it back. I can't. I am dead against your going. I know this country. It's not a place for lone women. And you're not much more than a child, whatever you may say. It's rough, I tell you. And you"—he looked down upon her slender fairness—"you weren't made for rough things."

"Please don't be silly, Jack!" she broke in. "I'm quite as strong as the average woman and, I hope, as capable. I'm grown up, you silly man! I'm old—older than you are in some ways; even though you have been in the world ten years longer. Can't you see I want to stretch my wings?"

"Want to leave me?" he said, and put his arms suddenly about her. She nestled to him on the instant, lifting her face to kiss him.

"No, darling, no! Never in life! But—you must see—you must see"—her eyes filled with tears unexpectedly, and she laid her head upon his shoulder to hide them—"that I can't—live on you—for ever. It

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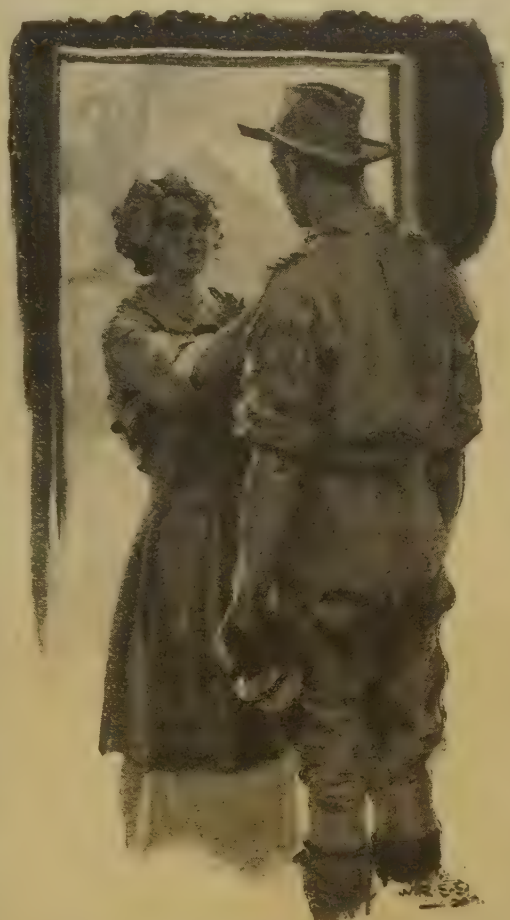
isn't fair—to you—or to Adela—or to—to—anyone else who might turn up."

"Ah!" he said. "Or to you either. We've no right to make a slave of you. I know that. Perhaps Adela hasn't altogether realized it."

"I've nothing—whatever—against Adela," Dot told him, rather shakily. "She has never been — other than kind. No, it is what I feel myself. I am not necessary to you or to Adela, and—in a way—I'm glad of it. I like to know you two are happy. I'm not a bit jealous, Jack, not a bit. It's just as it should be. But you'll have to let me go, dear. It's time I went. It's right that I should go. You mustn't try to hold me back."

But Jack's arms had tightened about her. "I hate the thought of it," he said. "Give it up! Give it up, old girl—for my sake!"

She shook her head silently in his embrace.



"He was looking at her squarely. 'I can't prevent you going,' he said, gruffly. 'But it won't be with my consent.'"

HE went on with less assurance. "If you wanted to get married it would be a different thing. I would never stand in the way of your marrying a decent man. If you must go, why don't you do that?"

She laughed rather tremulously. "You think every good woman ought to marry, don't you, Jack?"

"When there's a good man waiting for her, why not?" said Jack.

She lifted her head and looked at him. "I'm not going to marry Fletcher Hill, Jack," she said, with firmness.

Jack made a slight movement of impatience. "I never could see your objection to the man," he said.

She laughed again, drawing herself back from him. "But, Jack darling, a woman doesn't marry a man just because he's not objectionable, does she? I always said I wouldn't marry him, didn't I?"

"You might do a lot worse," said Jack.

"Of course I might—heaps worse. But that isn't the point. I think he's quite a good sort—in his own sardonic way. And he is a great friend of yours, too, isn't he? That fact would count vastly in his favour if I thought of marrying at all. But, you see—I don't."

"I call that uncommon hard on Fletcher," observed Jack.

She opened her blue eyes very wide. "My dear man, why?"

"After waiting for you all this time," he explained, suffering his arms to fall away from her.

She still gazed at him in astonishment. "Jack! But I never asked him to wait!"

He turned from her with a shrug of the shoulders. "No, but I did."

"You did? Jack, what can you mean?"

Jack stooped to feel one of his animal's hocks. He spoke without looking at her. "It's been my great wish — all this time. I've been deuced anxious about you often. Australia isn't the place for unprotected girls—at least, not out in the wilds. I've seen—more than enough of that. And you're no wiser than the rest. You lost your head once — over a rotter. You might again. Who knows?"

"Oh, really, Jack!" The girl's face flushed very deeply. She turned it aside instinctively, though he was not looking at her. But the colour died as quickly as it came, leaving her white and quivering.

She stood mutely struggling for self-control while Jack continued. "I know Fletcher. I know he's sound. He's a man who always gets what he wants. He wouldn't be a magistrate now if he didn't. And when I saw he wanted you, I made up my mind he

should have you if I could possibly work it. I gave him my word I'd help him, and I begged him to wait a bit, to give you time to get over that other affair. He's been waiting—ever since."

Dot's hands clenched slowly. She spoke with a great effort. "Then he'd better stop waiting—at once, Jack, and marry someone else."

"He won't do that," said Jack. He stood up again abruptly and faced round upon her. "Look here, dear! Why can't you give in and marry him? He's such a good sort if you only get to know him well. You've always kept him at arm's length, haven't you? Well, let him come a bit nearer! You'll soon like him well enough to marry him. He'd make you happy, Dot. Take my word for it!"

She met his look bravely, though the distress still lingered in her eyes. "But, dear old Jack," she said, "no woman can possibly love at will."

"It would come afterwards," Jack said, with conviction. "I know it would. He's such a good chap. You've never done him justice. See, Dot girl! You're not happy. I know that. You want to stretch your wings, you say. Well, there's only one way of doing it, for you can't go out into the world—this world—alone. At least, you'll break my heart if you do. He's the only fellow anywhere near worthy of you. And he's been so awfully patient. Do give him his chance!"

He put his arm round her shoulders again, holding her very tenderly.

She yielded herself to him with a suppressed sob. "I'm sure it would be wrong, Jack," she said.

"Not a bit wrong!" Jack maintained, stoutly. "What have you been waiting for all this time? A myth, an illusion, that can never come true! You've no right to spoil your own life and someone else's as well for such a reason as that. I call that wrong—if you like."

She hid her face against him with a piteous gesture. "He—said he would come back, Jack."

Jack frowned over her bowed head even while he softly stroked it. "And if he had—do you think I would ever have let you go to him? A cattle thief, Dot! An outlaw!"

She clung to him trembling. "He saved my life—at the risk of his own," she whispered, almost inarticulately.

"Oh, I know—I know. He was that sort—brave enough, but a hopeless rotter." Jack's voice held a curious mixture of tenderness and contempt. "Women always fall in love with that sort of fellow," he said. "Heaven knows why. But you'd no right to lose your heart to him, little 'un. You knew—you always knew—he wasn't the man for you."

She clung to him in silence for a space, then lifted her face. "All right, Jack," she said.

He looked at her closely for a moment. "Come! It's only silly sentiment," he urged. "You can't feel badly about it after all this time. Why, child, it's five years!"

She laughed rather shakily. "I am a big fool, aren't I, Jack? Yet—somehow—do you know—I thought he meant to come back."

"Not he!" declared Jack. "Catch Buckskin Bill putting his head back into the noose when once he had got away! He's not quite so simple as that, my dear. He probably cleared out of Australia for good as soon as he got the chance. And a good thing, too!" he added, with emphasis. "He'd done mischief enough."

She raised her lips to his. "Thank you for not laughing at me, Jack," she said. "Don't—ever—tell Adela, will you? I'm sure she would."

He smiled a little. "Yes, I think she would. She'd say you were old enough to know better."

Dot nodded. "And very sensible, too. I am."

He patted her shoulder. "Good girl! Then that chapter is closed. And—you're going to give poor Fletcher his chance?"

She drew a sharp breath. "Oh, I don't know. I can't promise that. Don't—don't hustle me, Jack!"

He gave her a hard squeeze and let her go. "There, she sha'n't be teased by her horrid bully of a brother! She's going to play the game off her own bat, and I wish her luck with all my heart."

He turned to the job of feeding his horse, and Dot, after a few inconsequent remarks, sauntered away in the direction of the barn, "to be alone with herself," as she put it.

CHAPTER II.

NUMBER THREE.

ADELA BURTON was laying the cloth for supper, and looking somewhat severe over the process. She was usually cheerful at that hour of the day, for it brought her husband back from his work and, thanks to Dot's ministrations, the evening was free from toil. It was seldom indeed that Adela bestirred herself to lay the cloth for any meal, for she maintained that it was better for a girl like Dot to have plenty to do at all times, and she herself preferred her needlework, at which she was an adept.

No one could have called her an idle

woman, but she was eminently a selfish one. She followed her own bent, quite regardless of the desires and inclinations of anyone else. She was the hub of her world from her own point of view, and she was wholly incapable of recognizing any other. Most people realized this and, as is the way of humanity, took her at her own valuation, making allowances for her undoubted egotism. For she was comely and had a taking manner, never troubling herself unless her own personal convenience were threatened. She laughed a good deal, though her sense of humour was none of the finest, and she was far too practical to possess any imagination. In short, as she herself expressed it, she was sensible; and, being so, she had small sympathy with her sister-in-law's foolish sentimentalities, which she considered wholly out of place in the everyday life at the farm.

Not that Dot ever dreamed of confiding in her. She sheltered herself invariably behind a reserve so delicate as to be almost imperceptible to the elder woman's blunter susceptibilities. But she could not always hide the fineness of her inner feelings, and there were times when the two clashed in consequence. The occasions were rare, but Adela had come to know by experience that when they occurred, opposition on her part was of no avail. Dot was bound to have her way when her soul was stirred to battle for it, as on the day when she had refused to let Robin, the dog, be chained up when not on duty with the sheep. Adela had objected to his presence in the house, and Dot had firmly insisted upon it on the score that Robin had always been an inmate as the companion and protector of her lonely hours.

Adela had disputed the point with some energy, but she had been vanquished, and now, when Dot asserted herself, she seldom met with opposition from her sister-in-law. It was practically impossible that they should ever be fond of one another. They had nothing in common. Yet it was very seldom that Jack saw any signs of strain between them. They dwelt together without antagonism and without intimacy.

Nevertheless, Dot's announcement of her desire to go out into the world and hew a way for herself came as no surprise to him. He knew that she was restless and far from happy, knew that his marriage had unsettled her, albeit in a fashion he had not fathomed till their talk together. His young sister was very dear to him. She had been thrown upon his care years before when the death of their parents had left her dependent upon him. It had always been his wish to have her with him. His love for her was of a deep, almost maternal nature, and he hated the thought of parting with her. He had hoped that the companionship of Adela would have been a joy to her, and he was intensely disappointed that it had proved otherwise. His anxiety for her welfare had always been uppermost with him, and it hurt him somewhat when Adela laughed at his hopes and fears regarding the girl. It was the only point upon which his wife and he lacked sympathy.

ENTERING by way of the kitchen premises on that evening of his talk with Dot, he was surprised to find Adela fulfilling what had come to be regarded as Dot's duties. He looked around him questioningly as she emerged from the larder carrying a dish in one hand and a jug of milk in the other.

"Where's the little 'un?" he said.

It was his recognized pet name for Dot, but for some reason Adela had never approved of it. She frowned now at its utterance.

"Do you mean Dot? Oh, mooning about somewhere, I suppose. And leaving other people to do the work."

Jack promptly relieved her of her burden and set himself to help her with her task.

Adela was not ill-tempered as a rule. She smiled at him. "Good man, Jack! No one can say you're an idler, anyway. I've got rather a nice supper for you. I shouldn't wonder if Fletcher Hill turns up to share it. I hear he is on circuit at Trelevan."

"I heard it, too," said Jack. "He's practically sure to come."

"He's very persistent," said Adela. "Do you think he will ever win out?"

Jack nodded slowly. "I've never known him fail yet in anything he set his mind to—at least, only once. And that was a fluke."

"What sort of a fluke?" questioned Adela, who was frankly curious.

"When Buckskin Bill slipped through his fingers." Jack spoke thoughtfully. "That's the only time I ever knew him fail, and I'm not sure that it wasn't intentional then."

"Intentional!" Adela opened her eyes.

Jack smiled a little. "I don't say it was so. I only say it was possible. But never mind that! It's an old story, and the man got away, anyhow—disappeared, dropped out. Possibly he's dead. I hope he is. He did mischief enough in a short time."

"He set the whole district humming, didn't he?" said Adela. "They say all the women fell in love with him at sight. I wish I'd seen him."

Jack broke into a laugh. "You'd certainly have fallen a victim!"

She tossed her head. "I'm sure I shouldn't. I prefer respectable men. Shall we lay an extra plate in case Mr. Hill turns up?"

"No," said Jack. "Let him come unexpectedly!"

She gave him a shrewd look. "You think Dot will like that best?"

He nodded again. "Be careful! She's coming. Here's Robin!"

Robin came in, wagging his tail and smiling, and behind him came Dot. She moved slowly, as if dispirited. Jack's quick eyes instantly detected the fact that she had been shedding tears.

"You're too late, little 'un," he said, with kindly cheeriness. "The work is all done."

She looked from him to Adela. "I'm sorry I'm late," she said. "I'm afraid I forgot about supper."

"Oh, you're in love!" joked Adela. "You'll forget to come in at all one of these days."

The girl gave her a swift look, but said nothing, passing through with a weary step on her way to her own room.

Robin followed her closely, as one in her confidence; and Jack laid a quiet hand on his wife's arm.

"Don't laugh at her!" he said.

She stared at him. "Good gracious, Jack! What's the matter? I didn't mean anything."

"I know you didn't. But this thing is serious. If Fletcher Hill comes to-night, I believe she'll have him—that is, if she's let alone. But she won't if you twit her with it. It's touch and go."

Jack spoke with great earnestness. It was evident that the matter was one upon which he felt very strongly, and Adela shrugged a tolerant shoulder and yielded to his persuasion.

"I'll be as solemn as a judge," she promised. "The affair certainly has hung fire considerably. It would be a good thing to get it settled. But Fletcher Hill! Well, he wouldn't be my choice!"

"He's a fine man," asserted Jack.

"Oh, I've no doubt. But he's an animal with a nasty bite, or I am much mistaken. However, let Dot marry him by all means if she feels that way! It's certainly high time she married somebody."

She turned aside to put the teapot on the hob, humming inconsequently, and the subject dropped.

JACK went to his room to wash, and in a few minutes more they gathered round the supper-table with careless talk of the doings of the day.

It had always been Dot's favourite time, the supper-hour. In the old days before Jack's marriage she had looked forward to it throughout the day. The companionship of this beloved brother of hers had been the chief joy of her life.

But things were different now. It was her part to serve the meal, to clear the table, and to wash the dishes. Jack and Adela were complete without her. Though they always welcomed her when the work was done, she knew that her society was wholly unessential, and she often prolonged her labours in the scullery that she might not intrude too soon upon them. She was no longer necessary to anyone—except to Robin the faithful, who followed her as her shadow. She had become Number Three, and she was lonely—she was lonely!

CHAPTER III.

FLETCHER HILL.

THERE came a sound of hoofs thudding over the pastures. Robin lifted his eyebrows and cocked his ears with a growl.

Dot barely glanced up from the saucepan she was cleaning; her lips tightened a little, that was all.

The hoofs drew rapidly nearer, dropping from a canter to a quick trot that ended in a clattering walk on the stones of the yard. Through the open window Dot heard the heavy thud of a man's feet as he jumped to the ground.

Then came Jack's voice upraised in greeting. "Hallo, Fletcher! Come in, man! Come in! Delighted to see you."

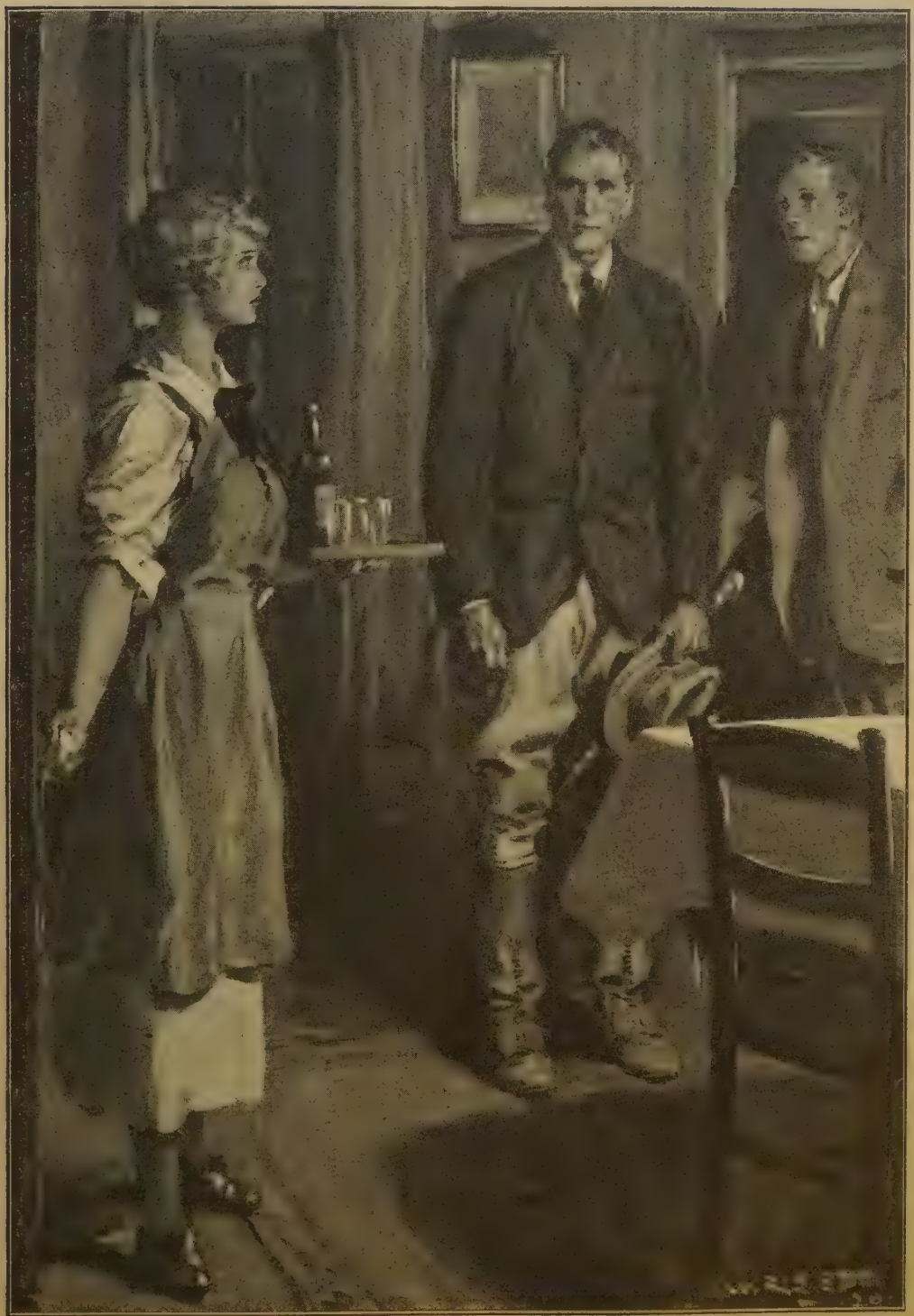
The voice that spoke in answer was short and clipped. Somehow it had an official sound. "Hallo, Jack! Good evening, Mrs. Burton! What! Alone?"

Jack laughed. "Dot's in the kitchen. Hi! little 'un! Bring some drinks!"

Robin was on his feet, uttering low, jerky barks. Dot put aside her saucepan and began to wash her hands. She did not hasten to obey Jack's call, but when she turned to collect glasses on a tray she was trembling and her breath came quickly, as if from violent exercise.

Nevertheless she did not hesitate, but went straight through to the little parlour, carrying her tray with the jingling glasses upon it.

Fletcher Hill was facing her as she entered, a tall man, tough and muscular, with black hair that was tinged with grey, and a long, stubborn jaw that gave him an indomitable look. His lips were thin and very firm, with a sardonic twist that imparted a faintly supercilious expression. His eyes were dark, deep-set, and shrewd. He was a magistrate of some repute in the district, a position which he had attained by sheer unswerving hard work in the police force, in which for years he had been known as "Bloodhound Hill." A man of rigid ideas and stern justice, he had forced his way to the front, respected



"She was trembling and her breath came quickly, but she went straight through to the little parlour, carrying her tray. Fletcher Hill was facing her as she entered."

by all, but genuinely liked by only a very few.

Jack Burton had regarded him as a friend for years, but even Jack could not claim a very close intimacy with him. He merely understood the man's silences better than most. His words were very rarely of a confidential order.

He was emphatically not a man to attract any girl very readily, and Dot's attitude towards him had always been of a strictly impersonal nature. In fact, Jack himself did not know whether she really liked him or not. Yet had he set his heart upon seeing her safely married to him. There was no other man of his acquaintance to whom he would willingly have entrusted her. For Dot was very precious in his eyes. But to his mind Fletcher Hill was worthy of her, and he believed that she would be as safe in his care as in his own.

THAT Fletcher Hill had long cherished the silent ambition of winning her was a fact well known to him. Only once had they ever spoken on the subject, and then the words had been few and briefly uttered. But to Jack, who had taken the initiative in the matter, they had been more than sufficient to testify to the man's earnestness of purpose. From that day he had been heart and soul on Fletcher's side.

He wished he could have given him a hint that evening as he looked up to see the girl standing in the doorway; for Dot was so cold, so aloof in her welcome. He did not see what Hill saw at the first glance—that she was quivering from head to foot with nervous agitation.

She set down her tray and gave her hand to the visitor. "Doesn't Rupert want a drink?" she said.

Rupert was his horse, and his most dearly-prized possession. Hill's rare smile showed for a moment at the question.

"Let him cool down a bit first," he said. "I am afraid I've ridden him rather hard."

She gave him a fleeting glance. "You have come from Trelevan?"

"Yes. I got there this afternoon. We left Wallacetown early this morning."

"Rode all the way?" questioned Jack.

"Yes, every inch. I wanted to see the Fortescue Gold Mine."

"Ah! There's a rough crowd there," said Jack. "They say all the uncaught criminals find their way to the Fortescue Gold Mine."

"Yes," said Hill.

"Is it true?" asked Adela, curiously.

"I am not in a position to say, madam." Hill's voice sounded sardonic.

"That means he doesn't know," explained Jack. "Look here, man! If you've ridden all the way from Wallacetown to-day you can't go back to Trelevan to-night. Your animal must be absolutely used up—if you are not."

"Oh, I think not. We are both tougher than that." Hill turned towards him. "Don't mix it too strong, Jack! I hardly ever touch it except under your roof."

"I am indeed honoured," laughed Jack. "But if you're going to spend the night you'll be able to sleep it off before you face your orderly in the morning."

"Do stay!" said Adela, hastening to follow up her husband's suggestion. "We should all like it. I hope you will."

Hill bowed towards her with stiff ceremony. "You are very kind, madam. But I don't like to give trouble, and I am expected back."

"By whom?" questioned Jack. "No one that counts, I'll swear. Your orderly won't break his heart if you take a night out. He'll probably do the same himself. And no one else will know. We'll let you leave as early as you like in the morning, but not before. Come, that's settled, isn't it? Go and get Rupert a shake-down, little 'un, and give him a decent feed with plenty of corn in it! No, let her, man; let her! She likes doing it, eh, Dot girl?"

"Yes, I like it," Dot said, and hurriedly disappeared before Hill could intervene.

Jack turned to his wife. "Now, missis! Go and make ready upstairs! It's only a little room, Fletcher, but it's snug. That's the way," as his wife followed Dot's example. "Now—quick, man! I want a word with you."

"Obviously," said the magistrate, dryly. "You needn't say it, thanks all the same. I'll leave that drink till—afterwards."

He straightened his tall figure with an instinctive bracing of the shoulders, and turned to the door.

Jack watched him go with a smile that was not untinged with anxiety, and lifted his glass as the door closed.

"You've got the cards, old feller," he said. "May you play 'em well!"

FLETCHER HILL stepped forth into the moonlit night and stood still. It had been a swift manœuvre on Jack's part, and it might have disconcerted a younger man and driven him into ill-considered action. But it was not this man's nature to act upon impulse. His caution was well known. It had been his safeguard in many a difficulty. It stood him in good stead now.

So for a space he remained, looking out over the widespread grasslands, his grim face oddly softened and made human. He was no longer an official, but a man, with feelings rendered all the keener for the habitual restraint with which he masked them.

He moved forward at length through the magic moonlight, guided by the sound of trampling hoofs in the building where Jack's horse was stabled. He reached the doorway, treading softly, and looked in.

Dot was in a stall with his mount Rupert—a powerful grey, beside which she looked even lighter and daintier than usual. The animal was nibbling caressingly at her arm while she filled the manger with hay. She was talking to him softly, and did not perceive Hill's presence. Robin, who sat waiting near the entrance, merely pricked his ears at his approach.

Some minutes passed. Fletcher stood like a sentinel against the door-post. He might have been part of it for his immobility. The girl within continued to talk to the horse while she provided for his comfort, low words unintelligible to the silent watcher, till, as she finished her task, she suddenly threw her arms about the animal's neck and leaned her head against it.

"Oh, Rupert," she said, and there was a throb of passion in her words, "I wish—I wish you and I could go right away into the wilderness together and never—never come back!"

Rupert turned his head and actually licked her hair. He was a horse of understanding.

She uttered a little sobbing laugh and tenderly kissed his nose. "You're a dear, sympathetic boy! Who taught you to be, I wonder? Not your master, I'm sure! He's nothing but a steel machine all through!"

And then she turned to leave the stable and came upon Fletcher Hill, mutely awaiting her.

CHAPTER IV.

THE COAT OF MAIL.

SHE gave a great start at sight of him, then quickly drew herself together.

"You have come to see if Rupert is all right for the night?" she said. "Go in and have a look at him."

But Fletcher made no movement to enter. He faced her with a certain rigidity. "No. I came to see you—alone."

She made a sharp movement that was almost a gesture of protest. Then she turned and drew the door softly shut behind her. Robin came and pressed close to her, as if he divined that she stood in need of some support. With her back to the closed door and the moonlight in her eyes, she stood before Fletcher Hill.

"What do you want to say to me?" she said.

He bent slightly towards her. "It is not a specially easy thing, Miss Burton," he said, "when I am more than half convinced that it is something you would rather not hear."

She met his look with unflinching steadiness. "I think life is made up of that sort of thing," she said. "It's like a great puzzle that never fits. I've been saying—unwelcome things—to-day, too."

She smiled, but her lips were quivering. The man's hands slowly clenched.

"That means you're unhappy," he said.

She nodded. "I've been telling Jack that I must get away—go and earn my own living somewhere. He won't hear of it."

"I can understand that," said Fletcher Hill. "I wouldn't—in his place."

She kept her eyes steadfastly raised to his. "Do you know what Jack wants me to do?" she said.

"Yes." Hill spoke briefly, almost sternly. "He wants you to marry me."

She nodded again. "Yes."

He held out his hand to her abruptly. "I want it, too," he said.

She made no movement towards him. "That is what you came to say?" she asked.

"Yes," said Hill.

He waited a moment; then, as she did not take his hand, bent with a certain mastery and took one of hers.

"I've wanted it for years," he said.

"Ah!" A little sound like a sob came with the words. She made as if she would withdraw her hand, but in the end—because he held it closely—she suffered him to keep it. She spoke with an effort. "I—think you ought to understand that—that—it is not my wish to marry at all. If—if Jack had stayed single, I—should have been content to live on here for always."

"Yes, I know," said Hill. "I saw that."

She went on tremulously. "I've always felt—that a woman ought to be able to manage alone. It's very kind of you to want to marry me. But—but I—I think I'm getting too old."

"Is that the only obstacle?" asked Hill.

She tried to laugh, but it ended in a sound of tears. She turned her face quickly aside. "I can't tell you—of any other," she said, with difficulty, "except—except——"

"Except that you don't like me much?" he suggested, dryly. "Well, that doesn't surprise me."

"Oh, I didn't say that!" She choked back her tears and turned back to him. "Let's walk a little way together, shall we? I—I'll try and explain—just how I feel about things."

He moved at once to comply. They walked side by side over the close-cropped grass. Dot would have slipped her hand free, but still he kept it.

They had traversed some yards before she

spoke again, and then her voice was low and studiously even.

"I can't pretend to you that there has never been anyone else. It wouldn't be right. You probably wouldn't believe me if I did."

"Oh, I gathered that a long time ago," Hill said.

"Yes, of course you did. You always see everything, don't you? It's your speciality."

"I don't go about with my eyes shut, certainly," said Hill.

"I'm glad of that," Dot said. "I would rather you knew about it. Only"—her voice quivered again—"I don't know how to tell you."

"You are sure you would rather I knew?" he said.

"Yes." She spoke with decision. "You've got to know if—if——" She broke off.

"If we are going to be married?" he suggested.

"Yes," whispered Dot.

HILL walked a few paces in silence. Then, unexpectedly, he drew the nervous little hand he held through his arm. "Well, you needn't tell me any more," he said. "I know the rest."

She started and stood still. There was quick fear in the look she threw him. "You mean Jack told you——"

"No, I don't," said Hill. "Jack has never yet told me anything I couldn't have told him ages before. I knew from the beginning. It was the fellow they called Buckskin Bill, wasn't it?"

She quivered from head to foot and was silent.

Hill went on ruthlessly. "First, by a stroke of luck, he saved you from death by snake-bite. He always had the luck on his side, that chap. I should have caught him but for that. I'd got him—I'd got him in the hollow of my hand. But you"—for the first time there was a streak of tenderness in his speech—"you were a new chum then—you held me up. Remember how you covered his retreat when we came up? Did you really think I didn't know?"

She uttered a sobbing laugh. "I was very frightened, too. I always was scared at the law."

Hill nodded. He also was grimly smiling. "But you dared it. You'd have dared anything for him that day. He always got the women on his side."

She winced a little.

"It's true," he asserted. "I know what happened—as well as if I'd seen it. He made love to you in a very gallant, courteous fashion. I never saw Buckskin Bill, but I believe he was always courteous when he had time. And he promised to come back, didn't he—when he'd given up being a thief and a swindler and had turned his hand to an honest trade? All that—for your sake! . . . Yes, I thought so. But, my dear child, do you really imagine he meant it—after all these years?"

She looked at him with a piteous little smile. "He—he'd be worth having—if he did, wouldn't he?" she said.

"I wonder," said Hill.

He waited for a few moments, then laid his hand upon her shoulder with a touch that seemed to her as heavy as the hand of the law.

"I can't help thinking," he said, "that you'd find a plain man like myself more satisfactory to live with. It's for you to decide. Only—it seems a pity to waste your life waiting for someone who will never come."

SHE could not contradict him. The argument was too obvious. She longed to put that steady hand away from her, but she felt physically incapable of doing so. An odd powerlessness possessed her. She was as one caught in a trap.

Yet after a second or two she mustered strength to ask a question to which she had long desired an answer. "Did you ever hear any more of him?"

"Not for certain. I believe he left the country, but I don't know. Anyway, he found this district too hot to hold him, for he never broke cover in this direction again. I should have had him if he had."

Fletcher Hill spoke with a grim assurance. He was holding her before him, one hand on her shoulder, the other grasping hers. Abruptly he bent towards her.

"Come!" he said. "It's going to be 'Yes,' isn't it?"

She looked up at him with troubled eyes. Suddenly she shivered as if an icy blast had caught her. "Oh, I'm frightened!" she said. "I'm frightened!"

"Nonsense!" said Hill.

He drew her gently to him and held her. She was shaking from head to foot. She began to sob, hopelessly, like a lost child.

"Don't!" he said. "Don't! It's all right. I'll take care of you. I'll make you happy. I swear to God I'll make you happy!"

It was forcibly spoken, and it showed her more of the man's inner nature than she had ever seen before. Almost in spite of herself she was touched. She leaned against him, fighting her weakness.

"It isn't—fair to you," she murmured at last.

"That's my affair," said Hill.

She kept her face hidden from him, and he did not seek to raise it; but there was

"With her back to the closed door and the moonlight in her eyes, she stood before Fletcher Hill. 'What do you want to say to me?' she said."

undoubted possession in the holding of his arms.

After a moment or two she spoke again. "What shall you do if—if you find you're not—happy with me?"

"I'll take my chance of that," said Fletcher Hill. He added, under his breath, "I'll be good to you—in any case."

That moved her. She lifted her face impulsively. "You—you are much nicer than I thought you were," she said.

He bent to her. "It isn't very difficult to be that," he said, with a somewhat sardonic touch of humour. "I haven't a very high standard to beat, have I?"

It was not very lover-like. Perhaps he feared to show her too much of his soul just then, lest he should seem to be claiming more than she was prepared to offer. Perhaps that reserve of his which clothed him like a coat of mail was more than even he could break through. But so it was that then—just then, when the desire of his heart was actually within his grasp, he contented himself with taking a very little. He kissed her indeed, though it was but a brief caress—over before her quivering lips could make return; nor did he seek to deter her as she withdrew herself from his arms.

She stood a moment, looking small and very forlorn. Then she turned to retrace her steps.

"Shall we go back?" she said.

He went back with her in silence till they reached the gate that led into the yard. Then for a second he grasped her arm, detaining her.

"It is—'Yes'?" he questioned.

She bent her head in acquiescence, not looking at him. "Yes," she said, in a whisper.

And Fletcher let her go.

(To be continued.)

ACROSTICS.

Our sixteenth series of acrostics begins with No. 89, printed below, and will run for four months. Prizes to the value of twelve guineas will be awarded to the most successful solvers.

DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 89.

Now comes the season of your merriment,
May these our pages add to your content.

1. Nine lives? And clearly there was none to spare,
As, finally, the beast was killed by care.

2. The best of gifts—our thoughts will turn to toast—
When it has once been lost, is valued most.

3. Queen of the world, not builded in a day,
O'er countless millions held unchallenged sway.

4. To some it means a hundred, maybe more,
And other players—sometimes—fail to score.

5. Tales and romances year by year came forth
In constant stream from Wizard of the North.

6. First flames across your eyes the lightning's flash,
And then reverberates this deafening crash.

7. Leave that is formal take: and now for you
Mediterranean island is in view.

8. Upon much-married king our thoughts we fix:
'Twas from this province came the first of six.

9. The time is short, 'tis found with class and sight,
And he will aid you if you wish to fight.

PAX.

Answers to Acrostic No. 89 should be addressed to the Acrostic Editor, The Strand Magazine, *Southampton Street, Strand, London, W.C.2, and must arrive not later than by the first post on December 10th.*

To every light one alternative answer may be sent; it should be written at the side. At the foot of his answer every solver should write his pseudonym and nothing else.

Answer to No. 88.

1.	B	ushe	L
2.	A	lib	I
3.	R	icke	T
4.	N	eba	T
5.	A	pri	L
6.	B	lu	E
7.	Y	ar	D
8.	R	est	O
9.	U	mme	R
10.	D	ono	R
11.	G	h	I
12.	E	lio	T

Notes.—Light 1. Eight gallons. 3. Cricket. The word is "Play," called by the umpire. 4. Father of Jeroboam. 5. March, charm. 6. Little Boy Blue: University athlete. 7. Hard. 8. Caius College; Doctor Caius, in "Merry Wives of Windsor"; Quickly; Presto. 9. Summer. Adder, one who adds. 10. View "Don or." River Don, River, giver—donor. 11. Alighieri, Dante; Ali, ire. 12. George Eliot wrote a poem, "Stradivarius," also "Felix Holt" and "Middlemarch." Antonio Stradivarius. Felix, happy; holt, a wood. Cæsar died on the fifteenth of March.

Acrostic solvers will be interested in a set of six literary acrostics, the lights and uprights of which are founded entirely on quotations and literary allusions. Prizes to the value of six pounds are offered. Copies from A. E., The Gables, Twyford, Winchester. Price, half a crown.

Modern Magic

by

F. BRITTEN AUSTIN

Illustrated by W. HATHERELL R.I

DR. HARGOOD sat with his young wife upon the veranda of the country hotel where they had passed the final weeks of their honeymoon. It was the end of their last day. To-morrow they would be travelling once more, on their way to the new existence in the home which awaited them. A silence had fallen upon them, a silence of quiet happiness that had taken up and resolved into a soundless harmony the fond lingering murmur of their last interchange of words.

He leaned forward absorbed in a rapt contemplation of her delicate profile as she gazed, lost in vague reverie, towards the sunset which silhouetted the dark summits of the wooded hills. So much older than she as almost to claim a possibility of paternity, he wondered—in a momentary self-depreciation—what so daintily youthful a creature (she was only twenty-three) could find to love in his premature grey hairs. He dismissed the thought on the instant. Her sincerity was too transparent, her affection too warm-heartedly genuine, to permit of doubt. She did love him, miracle though it appeared to him, and for himself alone. Neither his quite brilliant reputation (in his own limited world of medicine), nor his first-rate income had influenced her. In fact, she was almost as far from realizing the one as she was ignorant of the other. A less mercenary creature never existed. To him she was the incarnation of ideal womanhood—uniquely contrasted with all that sex that he knew with a professional cynicism which permitted no illusions. Dr. Hargood loved his young wife with that intensity of passion which is only possible to the man who, past the age of forty, loves for the first time. And he was happy, so happy a that man less easy in his conscience might have feared the jealous gods.

She sighed, invaded by some thought he could not fathom.

"What is it, dearest?" he asked, gently.

She turned a smile upon him.

"Nothing, dear. An old memory—not too pleasant—that came into my mind, I don't know why."

"Some similarity of circumstance—a scent in the air or just the evening quietness, perhaps—that awoke an association of ideas?" he hazarded, the professional psychologist in him showing itself.

Her shoulders moved in a slight shrug.

"I was thinking of someone I used to know several years ago—someone in whom I was disappointed," she answered. Sensitive to the deprecatory nuance in her tone, he forbore to press the subject.

He reached for her hand, fondled it.

"You shall never be disappointed in me, dearest," he murmured. "Be sure of that."

Her smile was a caress of the eyes.

"I *am* sure of it, Jimmy dear," she said, taking up his hand in hers and stroking it. She played automatically with a curiously-fashioned ring upon his little finger. "What a strange ring that is!" she said, seizing upon a pretext to change the conversation. "I'm sure it must have a history!"

He took the ring from his finger and held it up for her inspection.

"Many histories, dearest," he said, smilingly, "are connected with that ring. I use it habitually in my practice. I could not tell you how many tortured souls that ring has unlocked."

"You use it in your hypnotism?" she inquired, genuinely interested. "How fascinating! Has it really any uncanny properties?"

"Only that it is particularly apt to hold the attention of my patients," he replied. "Anything else would do as well if they looked at it steadily. But this appeals to their imagination and makes my task easier. Very few who gaze at it quietly for a few minutes when I hold it up before their eyes fail to slip into a suggestible condition."

"How is that, Jimmy?"

"My dear, I don't think there is a living man who can tell you the ultimate why and wherefore of it. We only know empirically that it is a fact that when a person gazes steadily at a bright object for a few minutes

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he tends to become drowsy—and in that drowsy condition his surface conscious mind is more or less out of the way and his subconsciousness dominant. It is a mere matter of sensory fatigue; a sudden bright light or violent sound will induce the condition in susceptible subjects. I find that this ring is a convenient object to focus their attention, that's all."

"And when they are hypnotized, you can make them do anything you like?"

"Pretty much. Of course, a doctor doesn't try circus-tricks. The value of hypnotism to us lies in the fact that through it we can reach the subconsciousness. That subconscious mind not only regulates what may be termed the automatic processes of the body—the functioning of the heart, digestion, and so forth—but it is the region from which arise impulses of conduct. It is when those impulses are perverted that we find hypnotism so valuable as a therapeutic agency. There is nothing like it for the cure of alcoholism or a drug-habit."

Her eyes looked at him with serious interest.

"Will it really cure a—a dope-maniac, Jimmy?" she asked.

"I have cured hundreds, darling," he replied. "Cured them so that the very idea of a drug is abhorrent to them."

"How wonderful! And is the cure permanent?"

He laughed confidently.

"My dear, nothing could make those people drug again when I have finished with them—unless I myself should hypnotize them and reverse the suggestion!" He chuckled at this *reductio ad absurdum*. "And I'm not very likely to do that!"

She sighed and looked away from him.

"I wish I had known that," she murmured, to herself rather than to him.

"Why, dear?" he asked.

"Oh, it doesn't matter now," she replied. "There was someone in whom I was interested once. A sad case. But I lost sight of him years ago."

"A *him*?" he said, with an arch uplifting of his eyebrows.

She shuddered.

"Don't let's talk about it, Jimmy. It's all finished—long ago! I had forgotten him almost—until to-night. He's gone right out of my life."

"Poor little woman!" he said, sympathetically. "I'm sorry I have awakened painful memories." An unworthy curiosity peeped out at the back of his mind, speculating on the nature of her interest in that individual. Then his robust commonsense asserted itself in quick reaction, banishing the absurdity of a retrospective jealousy. Of course she must have had emotional experiences prior to her meeting with him. She would not have been normal else. He looked at her, fondly. Dear little woman! There was no doubt of her genuine love for him. She had proved it every moment of their honeymoon. What a stimulating comrade she was! He shuddered at even a half-thought of life without her.

SHE turned her large eyes upon him.

"Do you think I ought to tell you about it, Jimmy—about the man I—I once thought a great deal of?"

"No, dearest," he smiled at her, "not unless it would help you to do so. I accept you gladly as you are. It is a new life we are beginning together. The past does not concern me."

She looked grateful appreciation of his chivalry, fondled again the hand on which he had replaced the ring.

"Only you matter to me now, Jimmy," she said. "He—the other—is quite dead."

"Then let him remain dead, dearest," he replied. "We have laid his ghost."

She sighed.

"You don't know how I love and admire your big nature, Jimmy. You need never fear comparison."

"Forget it, dear," he urged her. "You and I are one, we don't make comparisons."

She smiled at him, still playing idly with his ring.

"You know I feel almost a sort of awe of that ring, Jimmy—after what you have told me," she said, half-jokingly. "You must let me see its effect one day, will you?" Evidently she was deliberately changing the conversation to the impersonal. "I can't help thinking of what you said—the tortured souls it has unlocked. It's uncanny. I feel almost as though there must be magic in it."

He laughed lightly.

"Some of my patients think so, my dear," he said. "They call it my magic ring. Many of them, after they have sat for me a few times, have only to give one glance at it to be instantly in hypnosis. It is really rather startling to the inexperienced. It's just as if it put a spell upon them."

"How extraordinary!" she said. "And does that effect last?"

"Almost indefinitely. A susceptible subject—once he has got it fixed in his mind that the sight of that ring is a signal for hypnosis—would go into the condition immediately, no matter how long it was since I last treated him. Of course, it would help if he knew that I expected him to do so."

She looked at him with awe and admiration.

"What a power that gives you, Jimmy! That's real magic! Modern magic!"

He shrugged his shoulders.

"If you like. Perhaps hypnosis is the

"'Many histories, dearest,' he said, 'are connected with that ring.'"

only kind of real magic, ancient or modern—the basis of all the legends."

She looked at him curiously.

"It must be a great responsibility—a power like that! I'd trust you with it, but not many men!"

"Well," he said, in smiling self-deprecation, "I've never used it wrongly yet—but perhaps that's because I've never been tempted. It doesn't do to boast, my dear."

She stroked his hand.

"Dear one!" she murmured, fondly. Her eyes strayed away once more to the last glory of the sunset above the dark hills, remained fixed upon it in a resumption of her reverie. The quiet stillness of their surroundings reasserted its suggestion of silence. They sat, hand in hand, in a rapt hush of contentment.

Suddenly she turned to him.

"Jimmy! Do go and see if the post is in! I've got a sort of presentiment that there is a letter or something for us. Something waiting—perhaps it's a wedding-present! Do go and see!"

"Now *you* are getting uncanny!" He laughed good-humoured scepticism. "I don't expect anything to-night—our last night. But I'll go and see."

He rose from his chair, went through the French windows behind them and through their private sitting-room to the staircase beyond. The lights were already on as he

descended to the vestibule, where a solitary porter was struggling with the baggage of a new arrival. He went to the letter-rack. As he had expected, there was nothing for either of them. He was just about to remount the stairs when the sound of a familiar voice caused him to turn round sharply.

In the vestibule, giving instructions to the porter, stood a tall, handsome young man—at first sight not only intelligent but highly-strung, the type of young man whose cleverness is a product of an exceptionally sensitive nervous system rather than of fundamental brain-power. He recognized him at once. Dr. Hargood's success rested not a little on his aptitude for sympathetic relationship with his patients, and few of his patients during the past two years had interested him more than this young man. All the details of the case flashed instantly into his mind as he went forward to speak to him.

"Good evening, Mr. Kavanagh," he said. "How are you getting on?"

The young man switched round upon him, startled.

"Hallo, doctor!" he cried in exuberant cordiality. "Delighted to see you! What a pleasant surprise! I had no idea you were here!"

"Nor I that you were coming," smiled the doctor. "How are you keeping?"

"First-rate!" he answered. "Cured, absolutely—thanks to you, doctor. I can never be grateful enough."

The porter had gone up with the baggage and they were alone in the hall.

"Excellent," said the doctor. "I didn't think you would have a relapse."

Few, indeed, of his patients had been more susceptible to suggestion. He remembered all about him, perfectly. This young man was one of those in his mind when he had told his wife of the instantaneous effect of his ring.

As though something of his thought had communicated itself to the young man, the latter glanced down at his hand.

"I see you've still got your magic talisman, doctor!" he said, laughingly. "Be careful of it. I don't want to test its powers now."

"Nor ever again, I hope," replied the doctor. "And the lady——?"

The young man made a hopeless gesture of hands and shoulders.

"Vanished! Vanished utterly, doctor!" There was bitterness in his tone. "One of life's little ironies!"

IT was. The doctor remembered perfectly. He had a flash of visualization of that young man's first visit to his consulting-room, a despondent wreck, yet pathetically anxious for a cure. He remembered his story. A clever young man, nervous instability inherent in him, who had overstrained himself at college and had begun to drug in order to pass an examination, the habit once formed had gripped him inexorably. Nothing could keep him from it, not even the influence of a young woman of whom he was evidently passionately fond and who had tried again and again to redeem him from the vice. Two years before she had given him his last chance—and he had failed to keep his word. How familiar, almost banal, was the tale of wretched weakness! In all essential details, it had been related to him a hundred times. Two years of squalid degradation had followed, two years in which he had tried to kill the memory of what he had thrown away. Then a chance sight of that young woman in the street, unobserved by her, had started a new and overwhelming impulse once more to attempt conquest of his vice. He had come to him, scarcely believing in the possibility that he might yet decently present himself to her—that was his only thought; the doctor had been struck by the intensity of his longing for her—but resolved to fight for it. And he had cured him, cured him absolutely. He had never known a subconsciousness more ready to accept and retain his suggestions. It was indeed an irony that, the fight won, his motive should remain unrewarded, the girl perhaps ignorant of his cure.

"Hard luck!" said the doctor. "But perhaps you'll find her yet."

"If she's living I shall!" replied the young man, almost violent in his emphasis. "That girl loved me as much as I loved her, doctor. I'm positive of it. It was the real thing—the thing that comes only once in a life-time. And if she's alive she loves me still."

"I can only hope you'll find her."

"I've been searching for her for a year and there isn't a trace. Her family have moved, that's all I could discover. You know, doctor," he added, jestingly, "it's up to you to produce her. You guaranteed, on my first visit to you, that we should come together again!"

"I think I only guaranteed that you should be fit to claim her, Mr. Kavanagh," answered the doctor, good-humouredly. "But, if it's in my power, I assure you nothing will give me greater pleasure than to restore her to you. But come up and be introduced to my wife. We may not have another opportunity, as we leave to-morrow morning. You must do to me, Mr. Kavanagh, what I cannot yet do to you in that respect—congratulate me. We are only just married and this is the last day of our honeymoon."

The young man seized him cordially by the hand.

"With all my heart, doctor! She's a

"'Come into the sitting-room,' the doctor said, 'both of you. And we'll thresh this out.'"

lucky woman, whoever she is. There isn't a better fellow in the world than her husband, I can vouch for that. I'm sure you are going to be as happy as you deserve—and I'd like to tell Mrs. Hargood so."

"Come right along, then. We've got a sitting-room upstairs and she's on the veranda."

The young man followed him up the staircase and through the sitting-room, now almost dark. The doctor led the way on to the veranda, stood over his wife's chair.

"My dear," he said, "I want you to know Mr. Kavanagh."

She looked round quickly, startled out of her reverie. Her eyes rested, in wide-open astonishment as though they saw a ghost, upon the young man framed in the long window. An inarticulate cry, almost of alarm, escaped her. She half-rose from her chair, drew herself away from him in a sudden impulse of recoil.

Her husband switched round also to the young man, a lightning flash of revelation lividly illuminative across his soul. Kavanagh stood staring in an amazement equal to hers.

"Sybil!" he ejaculated, involuntarily.

The three of them remained for a long moment immobile, incapable of movement. Then Mrs. Hargood turned to her husband.

"Jimmy!" she said, with a gasp of difficulty in her utterance, "this—this is cruel of you!"

Dr. Hargood's somewhat ascetic features were stern over a sudden agony in his own breast.

"My dear," he said, in a controlled voice, "forgive me—I—I didn't know. This is ——?"

"Eric!—Someone I—I—spoke of."

She stared at the young man once more as though he were a ghost.

Her husband looked at her with eyes which, while they revealed nothing of his own thoughts, seemed to penetrate to the heart of her.

"Sybil—this was more—more than a passing fancy?" The query was uttered with a grave restraint, his voice gentle.

"Yes——," she murmured, replying almost automatically, her eyes still fixed upon Kavanagh.

He took a deep breath.

"I understand, dear—I quite understand." He turned to Kavanagh. "Another one of life's little ironies," he said, grimly.

The young man stepped forward.

"Doctor—I'll clear out! I'll go at once! I didn't imagine—I could not have imagined ——"

"None of us could have imagined," replied the doctor. His wife glanced at him, surprised at the unfamiliar edge upon his ordinarily kind voice. "It's a little trick the Fates have played on all of us. One of their ironic little dramas for which we have to find the fitting dénouement. I hope they enjoy the comedy!"

"Don't, Jimmy!" murmured his wife, in revolt at his sarcasm.

"There's only one thing for me to do, doctor," said Kavanagh, his voice betraying the effort for mastery over emotion. "Go at once. Good-night."

The doctor glanced at his wife. She clutched at the back of her chair and swayed with closed eyes as though about to faint.

"Yes, go!" she breathed. "Go at once!"

The doctor turned upon the young man.

"No!" he exclaimed, imperative command in his tone. "Not yet! You cannot go like that. We must face this situation out. We can't run away from it—any of us." His stern dignity imposed itself upon the others. The young man hesitated in the window, his movement to depart relinquished. His wife looked at him speechlessly, in a paralysis of volition. "Come into the sitting-room," he said, "both of you. And we'll thresh this out."

HE stepped into the room, switched on the electric-light. The others followed him. He turned round upon them as they stood at a little distance from each other, not daring to exchange glances but both watching him in suspense for his next move. A perception, cruel in its vividness, of their fitness for each other flashed through his brain. A better-matched young couple might scarcely be found. He had almost a feeling of paternity to both of them as he contemplated their equally handsome youth. It seemed impossible that she, so girlishly beautiful, despite the emotion which blanched her features, could be the wife of his own middle-age. The incongruity was brutal. And yet relinquishment—the mere flitting suggestion of it—was an agony worse than death to him. His life was wholly concentrated in her. He had never so intensely realized it.

His wife took a step towards him, her hand feeling unsteadily along the table for support. Her face was tragic.

"Jimmy," she said, imploringly, "I'm sure it would be better if Eric—if Mr. Kavanagh went. This is cruel to all of us."

"I agree, doctor," the young man reinforced her eagerly. "This is an impossible situation and we cannot improve it by prolonging it. I can only apologize for my unintended intrusion upon your——" he hesitated a moment, "—your happiness. I wish you both the very best." A just perceptible self-pity mingled with the renunciation of his tone.

Mrs. Hargood gave him an involuntary glance of appreciation.

"No," replied the doctor, "we cannot run away from it like that. We're all decent people with our rights to human happiness. We've got to settle this matter in a way that at any rate leaves us all with an easy conscience. If we shirked this crisis—painful as it is—it would haunt us all our lives."

He glanced at both of them as though for their assent. They remained silent. He turned to his wife.

"Sybil, you loved this young man?"

She stared at him for a moment before she could summon speech, her bosom heaving. Her utterance, when she achieved it, was almost a cry of pain.

"Jimmy, don't! Don't dig it all up!—I am your wife—and whatever happens I will always be a faithful and affectionate wife to you! I am proud to be your wife, Jim!"

His voice was tenderly kind as he replied, with a gentle insistence, "That's not the question, Sybil."

She looked at Kavanagh, proudly resentful.

"I refused him—long ago. And he knows why."

"I know why, too. Does he look the same man now as when you refused him?"

She hesitated, glancing at the young man with a new curiosity.

"No—no, he—he certainly seems changed."

"He's cured!"

THE decisiveness of his statement rang in her ears. She gasped, looked again in a quickly-dispelled incredulity at the keenly alert countenance of the young man. He was obviously as fit as an athlete in training.

"Cured!" she repeated, dazedly; "oh, I'm so glad, Eric!"

He took a step towards her.

"Yes. I'm cured, Sybil—quite cured of the vice that degraded me. But it's no merit of mine. It is thanks to your husband there. It was he who cured me—who made a man of me again!"

She stared at him.

"Jim—Jim cured you?" she repeated, as though her comprehension was stunned afresh by this new revelation. "Jim—really cured you?"

"For a whole year I have loathed the very thought of a drug," he said, emphatically. "And it is entirely thanks to Dr. Hargood."

She looked round at her husband, speechless.

"He is not being quite fair to himself," said the doctor, grimly. "He hasn't given you the whole story. I couldn't have cured him if he had not been intensely anxious to be cured. He came to me for treatment because he had caught sight of you in the street—and he was determined to make one more attempt to win you. His desire for you was the real agent."

She put both hands to her face, hid herself.

"Oh, this is awful! awful!" she murmured. "Don't! I—I can't stand any more!"

She swayed and reeled as though about to fall. Kavanagh sprang to support her with instinctively ready arms. He had scarcely touched her before he was flung off by a violent hand.

Dr. Hargood had leaped with equal readiness to his wife's assistance, enfolded her with one arm. His face was convulsed with passion.

"Stand aside!" he commanded, brutally. "She is my wife—not yours!"

An answering passion flamed up in the young man's eyes. His self-control vanished.

"By marriage!" he sneered. "Not by love!"

The two men's eyes met in the primitive hatred of males at conflict in the love-fight, the female present for the victor.

Dr. Hargood's chest heaved. His eyes blazed in a fury of menaced possession, in a mad instinctive passion that exploded from volcanic depths unsuspected in himself. A germ of sanity in him marvelled at this elemental self, an elemental self that envisaged murder—strove for control.

"Be careful!" he warned him. "Don't let me hear you say that again!"

The young man's face was livid.

"If you put it that way——!" he muttered. A devil rose in him. "I say that she is my woman by right of love," he amplified in steady defiance. "Even if you have managed to persuade her to marry you. There's a bigger power than a parson—and you know it."

His eyes emphasized the challenge.

"Let her decide!" he sneered, in the silence of the doctor. "Unless you are afraid to!"

Dr. Hargood mastered himself by an effort plainly visible in his face. His jaw set hard. He took a long breath, looked his rival in the eyes, and then, a coldly definite resolution evident in him, assisted his wife to a chair. She sat limply in it, her face hidden in her hands.

"You heard what he said?" he demanded.

"Yes," she murmured faintly, not venturing a glance.

"Choose!" he said.

She looked up, desperately forlorn, her eyes filled with tears.

"Oh, Jim!" she cried, "it's wicked of me, but I wish—I wish you hadn't cured him!"

"Is that good enough?" demanded Kavanagh, maliciously triumphant.

"No!" said the doctor, vehemently. "No!—a thousand times no! I will not take that evasion for an answer!"

"It was definite enough for me!" The tone of the young man's voice was an insult at which the doctor flushed.

Mrs. Hargood looked up piteously.

"Oh, Jim—I *am* married to you. Isn't that enough?"

The doctor clenched his fists against his brow in an agony of the soul.

"An hour ago I should have said it was!" he murmured. "Oh, my God!—this is unendurable! We can't go through life with this hanging over us!"

KAVANAGH prosecuted his advantage mercilessly.

"Marriages are not unbreakable!" he said. The combative instincts of his Irish race now ran riot in him unchecked. It was ruthless war, every faculty of him aflame, between him and that older man at whom he glared in furious hatred. His earlier mood of renunciation, of gratitude, was far from him, forgotten. At that momentary contact with the woman he had brooded over for so long, the slumbering passion in him had leaped to overwhelming mastery. He was reckless of all else in the imagined possibility of obtaining her. He turned to her, voice and gesture eloquent.

"Sybil! It matters not who cured me—I *am* cured, cured for ever! I'm a strong, clean-living man for the rest of my life. If—before your marriage ceremony—you had met me, cured as I am of the vice which was all that parted us three years ago, would you, could you have gone on with it?"

She looked at him in dumb anguish. Her eyes turned appealingly to her husband. She found no help there. Implicitly, his silence waited for her answer.

"I—I'd rather not say—I will not say," she replied, the effort obvious. "It is all beside the point," she continued, wearily. "What is done is done—and we must all abide by it."

Her husband came close to her.

"No, Sybil," he said, steadily. "As Mr. Kavanagh said just now, marriages are not unbreakable. Ours would be a mockery if you cannot answer his question honestly. Would you prefer him to me?"

She looked up, stung into an assertion of her dignity.

"Well, then, I will answer—unfair as the question is. When I promised to marry you, had I known that Eric was—as he is now—I should have prayed never to meet him!" She rose from her seat, flushing with outraged pride. "This unseemly wrangle has gone on long enough. If you think I am a woman to be fought over, you can settle it between yourselves. You forget the respect you owe me." She looked her husband in the eyes in angry resentment. "If you admit that your wife may be snatched from you, then fight it out—and leave me to the victor!" She flashed scorn at him. "But wait until I have left the room!" She moved a step or two towards the door.

Her husband stopped her.

"No, my dear," he said, decisively. "I do not admit that my wife may be snatched from me. But I would have made it easy for you had you desired to leave me. Please sit down. I want this situation cleared up calmly between all three of us. You have given your answer and I am satisfied with it. Sit down, my dear." He pushed her back gently into the chair with a quiet mastery she could not protest. He turned to Kavanagh. "You heard? Let that be sufficient."

"It is not sufficient," cried Kavanagh, furiously. "She is not a free agent. You impose your will upon her—hypnotize her like you used to hypnotize me! Left to herself, she would choose the only man she has ever really loved."

The doctor looked at him in genuine commiseration.

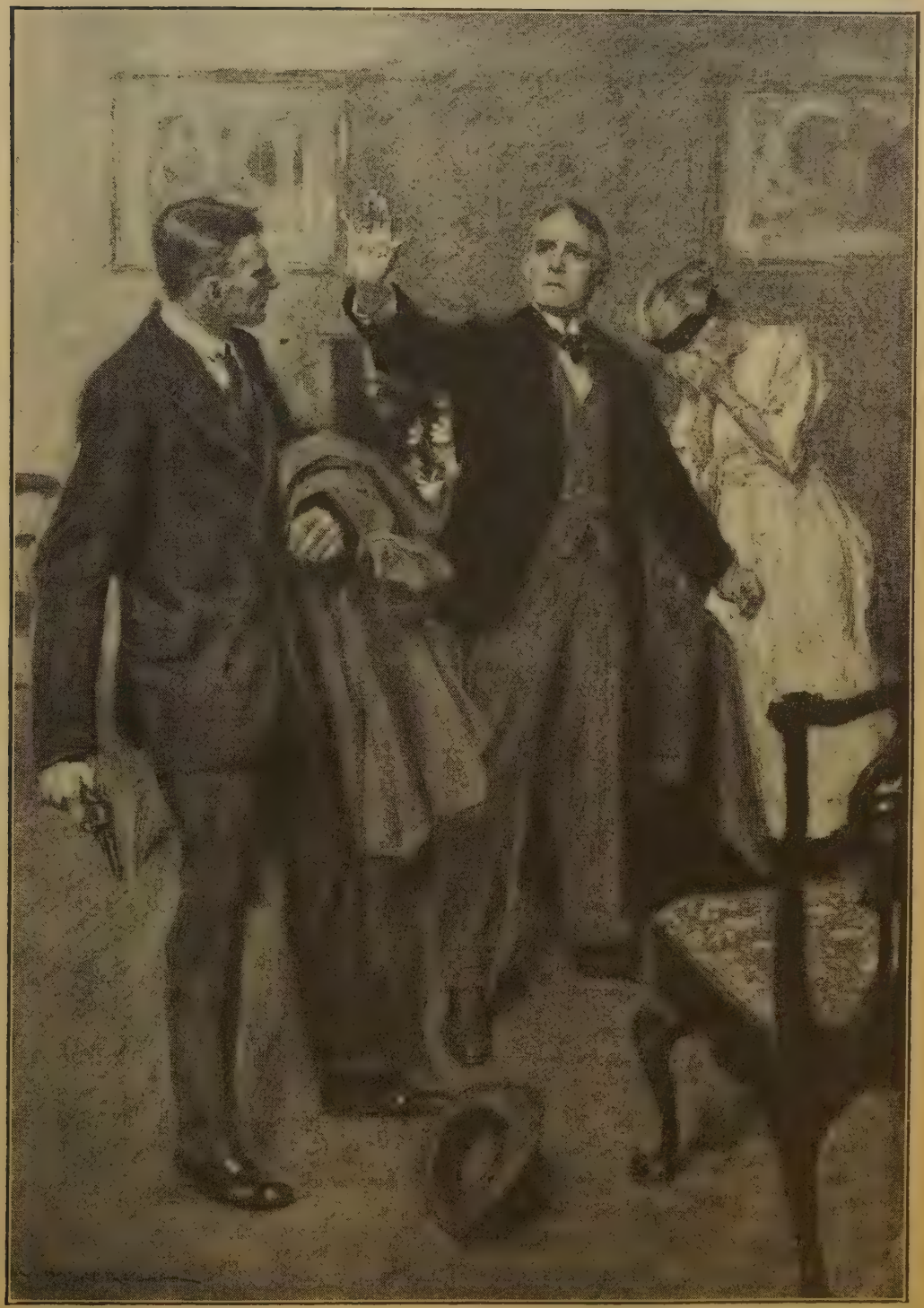
"My poor lad!" he said, putting a hand upon his shoulder. "I wish from the bottom of my heart that all this had never happened."

The young man flung him off.

"It would not have happened if you had not stolen my woman!" he cried. "My woman! My woman for eternity—if not in this world, then in the next! And do you think she doesn't know it? Look at her!" Dr. Hargood glanced to his wife's face, drawn with a dumb agony, her eyes fixed in an indefinable expression upon the young man. Something broke suddenly in him. "Look at her! She's mine! Mine, I say, for ever!" Kavanagh's voice rose almost to a scream of madness. "And if I do not have her, no one else shall!"

His hand dived into his pocket, whipped out a revolver. Even as Mrs. Hargood cried out, and ere the young man could point the weapon, the doctor's right hand had risen in a commanding gesture before his face.

"Stop!" he said, in a voice that was so sternly, startlingly imperative as to impose obedience. He ignored his danger as though it did not exist. "Do you see that?" Mrs. Hargood, looking wildly at her husband, impressive as never before in her experience, saw that the ring glittered in his fingers. "Do you recognize it? You do! It means sleep! Sleep, and obedience to what I say!"



"Ere the young man could point the weapon the doctor's right hand had risen in a commanding gesture. 'Stop!' he said."

The young man stood stock still, staring as if fascinated at the ring held before his eyes.

"You cannot disobey the suggestion of that ring!" continued the doctor. "It is a symbol of a waking sleep which your mind must obey even as it has obeyed it so many times before! You are obeying it. You cannot move! You are in that state where you do whatever I tell you. Drop that weapon!" he finished, sharply.

The revolver fell with a heavy thud upon the floor.

"Keep your eyes fixed on this ring!" commanded the doctor. "You cannot help it—you cannot take them from it. It is the magic ring which you remember. The magic ring which lays your mind open to mine. Now, still looking at it, sit down in that chair."

Kavanagh obeyed, moved like a sleep-walker, with staring eyes fixed on the ring, to the designated seat. He sat down heavily.

"Good," said the doctor. "Now you are still going to keep those eyes open. I don't want them closed. You can't close them! You can try if you like." There was a faint, just perceptible movement of the muscles round the young man's eyes, but they remained wide open. "You see for yourself. You can't close them. You are entirely at my command. You can do nothing but what I order you to do—and that you cannot help doing. You know that? Answer!"

"Yes," said the young man, faintly, with a voice that seemed scarcely his own.

Dr. Hargood heard the deep breathing of his wife behind him as she sat, held in the fascination of this drama.

"Good," he continued. "You realize that. You realize that you are now in the same condition as when I gave you the suggestion that cocaine was loathsome to you. Is not that so? Answer!"

"Yes," came the faint, lifeless voice.

"Jim!—*Jimmy!*" Mrs. Hargood's voice murmured behind him in a terrified appeal.

"You realize that it was entirely because I suggested to you that you should not drug that now you do not drug? You realize that you are merely what I have made you?"

"I—I don't want to drug," came the voice, plaintively.

"You don't want to. But you could not help yourself. Without me, you could not refrain from it. Is that not so? Answer!"

"Yes!"

"Good. And you realize that just as I stopped you drugging I could make you drug again? I could put you back into the situation in which you came to me—and worse. The impulses are still there. I have only to release them. Is that not so?"

There was no answer.

"*Jimmy!*" cried his wife behind him, her voice poignant.

"Is that not so? It only depends on me now whether I take away the suggestion of immunity from temptation which I gave you." He ignored the imploring cry behind him. "Answer!"

"Yes," replied the lifeless voice.

The doctor turned to his wife, gave her a penetrating glance. She regarded him with speechless terror. There was a dead silence in the room. A clock upon the mantelpiece ticked out seconds fraught with three human fates. Dr. Hargood's face was set in a stern meditation. In the chair the young man, so utterly at his mercy, sat as though life was suspended in him. The young woman dared no movement. She felt her heart beating heavily as she waited for her husband's decision.

HE stood, austere, inscrutable, in a world of thought remote from her, at grips with his problem.

Suddenly he looked up from those hidden thoughts she could not probe. His face was hard with a fixed resolve. Focused upon him though all her faculties were, she could not fathom it. Anxiety leaped to an agonizing crisis in her as he turned once more to Kavanagh, his hand raised before the eyes which stared in a sightless fixation.

"You hear me?"

"Yes."

"You are going to remember this. You are going to remember that I held your soul in the hollow of my hand"—he paused impressively—"and that I was merciful! I might have rendered you once more despicable in the eyes of the woman you love—the woman I believe loves you! *I am not going to do it!* I am going to impress upon you more forcibly than ever that cocaine—drugs in any form—are for ever utterly abhorrent to you. Nothing, ever, not even a suggestion in hypnosis, will take away your immunity. You need never fear. You are and always will be less likely to touch them than when you came into this room. This is a suggestion you cannot fail to obey, just as you obeyed the suggestions I made to you when you came to me for treatment. It is a more powerful suggestion than I have ever made to you"—he spoke with a level intensity which had the full force of his will behind it—"it will last as long as you live. Do you understand me?"

"Yes," came the lifeless voice.

"Another thing. Your anger will fall from you. It has fallen from you now. Whatever happens, you will have nothing

but kindly and friendly thoughts for me. As for this woman—for Sybil," his voice all but broke; he mastered it quickly, "for Sybil, if you marry her you will have nothing but loving-kindness all the days of your life. There will be no jealousy—no indifference. Nothing but perfect love and trust. Such a love as I have for her. Can you feel that love in me?"

"Yes." The answer was solemn. "I —I feel it intensely."

"Such a love as I have for her, bigger than life, caring only for her happiness, concerned only with her welfare, where yourself is nothing, you will have for her if you marry her. Whenever the temptation to do her wrong assails you, remember the temptation I had to wrong you—and resist it as I resisted it! I am going to set her free. She is free—free to go to the man she loves! You understand me?"

"Yes."

"Then wake!"

He dropped the hand he had held before the staring eyes. Kavanagh shuddered, stirred in his chair, smiled—perfectly normal. His eyes sought Mrs. Hargood as though in expectation of a welcoming word or gesture.

Dr. Hargood turned to his wife.

"You heard what I said, Sybil?"

"Yes," she answered, in a low voice.

"You can consider yourself perfectly free. Don't worry. We will unmake this marriage of ours. Leave it to me."

"Jim!" She sprang up from her chair. "*Jim!*"

He had turned away from her to Kavanagh.

"I must ask you to leave us for this evening. To-morrow, Mrs. Hargood—Sybil —will still be here——"

"*Jim!*" His wife ran to him, threw both her arms about his neck. "Jimmy, darling! Don't talk like that! I want you —you—you and only you!"

He looked into her face, startled and uncomprehending.

"Why, dear—I thought—I believed——"

"Oh, Jimmy, darling, how could you be so blind! It's you I want—you, my big, strong soul of a man!" Her voice broke down into sobs as he clasped her. "Oh, Jimmy, it was just madness—all you thought! I've never loved you so much as I love you at this moment—and I don't care who knows it!" She lifted up her tear-stained face from his shoulder and looked defiantly at Kavanagh.

"But—Sybil—you loved Kavanagh—just now——"

Dr. Hargood was obviously bewildered.

"Like a girl!" she answered. "Oh, I don't want to hurt him—but it was a girl's love I had for him. For you, Jimmy darling, it's a woman's love—the love of a woman for a man who is a master among men. How could I love him after—after I had seen him like wax in your fingers!" She laughed in ridicule of herself. "Oh, I know I'm cruel. Every woman is cruel when she fights for the man she loves. Forgive me, Eric—and forget me! I'm not your woman!"

HE got up, approached them as they stood with arms about each other. For a long moment he stood contemplating them, while realization swept over him. Then his face cleared.

"Not forget you, Sybil," he said. "But you're right. I felt your husband's love like a living force vibrating through me when I was"—he hesitated—"just now. It's a bigger thing than I am capable of. I know myself. If you can inspire such love as that—so much more than I could have believed possible in a man—then you are right. I'm not the man for you. I shall never forget you—but I can acquiesce in"—he hesitated again—"in what is right. Good-night, doctor," he held out his hand. "We are friends. I shall perhaps see you in the morning. If not—I shall always remember what I owe to you; not," he smiled, "what I lost to you. Good-night, both of you!"

He walked to the door, went out.

Alone together, she looked up to him with a shy smile, held a hand with outstretched fingers up to him.

"Slip that ring upon my finger, Jimmy, darling! Marry me again with it! I said there was magic in it. There is—the magic of love! Yours and mine! The only real magic—the magic which is not ancient nor modern, but eternal!"

ANIMAL CARICATURISTS

by

FENN SHERIE

GENERALLY speaking, the qualities in animals that make the most direct appeal to our sense of humour—and, indeed, to our affections also—are those in which the dumb creatures reflect our own natures. Naturally, any sign of sagacity in an animal tends to bind him closer to humanity, but it is the animal that can emulate the actions or expressions of a human being—the monkey that can use his hands, the parrot that can talk, or the dog that can walk on his hind legs—that has the most power in attracting and holding the interest of mankind.

When we encounter an animal in which the "human" element is not immediately apparent we commence subconsciously to seek it, and to a considerable degree it is the animal caricaturist who helps us in this search.

Without discussing the why and wherefore of man's desire to see his own reflection in the animal world, it is interesting to note that the same inherent desire is evidenced in childhood. Are not the favourite playbooks and the children's pages of the popular journals decorated with pictures of animals, dressed incongruously in human attire, and performing unnatural human antics?

Obviously there is a connecting link between the elementary fun of the children's animal pictures and the more subtle and delicate humour of the animal caricatures such as appear in these pages. At any rate we are, so to speak, "tickled in the same spot" to-day as we were in childhood, for the humour of all such drawings is based upon the same principle—the presentation of the "human" aspect of animal life.

There is, however, one important distinction. Those who draw animals for the amusement of children obtain the human element in their pictures by the superficial addition of clothes, whereas those who cater for the adult *discover* the human element in the animal itself, and bring it to our notice by means of caricature, only adding clothes when they are essential to carry the humour and are suggested by the animal itself.

ACKNOWLEDGED foremost among the animal caricaturists of the present day is Mr. J. A. Shepherd, whose work has appeared in THE STRAND MAGAZINE almost from the first number. His "Zig-Zags at the Zoo" were an instantaneous success, and as a measure of his present popularity it may be mentioned that he has made a great many sketches for the cinema, the films of which have met with a gratifying reception wherever they have been shown.

Most of Mr. Shepherd's preliminary studies are made from the animals themselves, and it is whilst he is watching their movements and habits that his ideas come to him. Those who have been privileged to glance through his sketch-book can see that the artist views all his subjects through the eyes of a born humorist, for even his roughest pencil impressions reveal a slight element of caricature. Consequently, in his finished drawings there is never a line that conveys any feeling of unnaturalness or incongruity.

Many of us will often have seen a group of storks at the Zoological Gardens standing together as the artist has depicted them, without feeling the least desire to smile. But when Mr. Shepherd transfers them to paper, adding a pair of spectacles to the beak of one of the birds, slightly emphasizing their semi-bald heads, their rounded "shoulders," and, with the most delicate touch, faintly suggesting tail-coats upon their backs, the humour of "The Big Three" immediately comes to the surface.

The painful—and intensely human—incident of the crying baby is another clever study which Mr. Shepherd roughed out on the spot, the humour being obtained only by the very slightest caricature of the animals' expressions.

Similarly the study of the seafaring parrot was also drawn from life. The title of the subject was suggested by the bearing and facial expression of the birds themselves, and it will be noticed that Mr. Shepherd has outlined only such clothes as are necessary to bring forward the idea he has in his mind. Once we have grasped exactly what the artist intends to convey to us, the clothes become of secondary importance, and even if they were erased from the picture the

humour would remain in the caricatures themselves.

Mr. Harry Rountree has made a reputation in more than one branch of art, for in addition to being a brilliant colourist he shines both as a caricaturist and a painter of the more serious and vigorous studies of animal life. Being a keen observer and having had many years of experience in drawing animals, he relies almost entirely upon his memory when making his humorous sketches. Mr. Rountree's first efforts in the realms of animal caricature were a series of illustrations for children's books, and even to-day he argues that "men are but children of a larger growth," for he aims to appeal to young and old alike. In this respect as well as in others he is singularly successful.

Besides displaying the ever-popular topical touch characteristic of much of Mr. Rountree's

"The Big Three"—A study at the Zoo.

The seafaring parrot tells tales of buccaneers and buried gold

itself, for the idea inspired by the old nursery rhyme is plain for all to see. It will be noticed that Mr. Rountree prefers to select the juveniles of the animal kingdom for his subjects, especially in the case of the wilder and more ferocious

work, and the quaint humour of the facial expression, the sketch of the fledgling and the field-mouse serves as an excellent example of the artist's skill in the delicate handling of water-colours.

The caricature of the mouse, under the title "Ding Dong Dell," speaks for

The crying baby. "What hath the night to do with sleep?"

"I see you've got your income-tax papers!"

types. He contends that there is usually more humour to be found in the antics of the younger animals than in their more sedate parents, and this point is clearly evident in the study of the boxing bear cubs.

"It is a common belief," says Mr. Rountree, "that when a young animal is depicted wearing clothes the drawing will appeal to children only. From my own experience I have found that if the clothes are added in such a way as not to destroy the real animal, older people like them just as much. Moreover, when they serve a subtle purpose, as do the gloves and boots of the cubs, in covering up the claws and thus concealing the unfriendliness of the beasties, I think they are justifiable."

Certainly it is only the grown-up sportsman who can appreciate the masterpiece of expression in the faces of the cubs—the surprise of the receiver and the look of mingled satisfaction and anxiety of the giver.

Primarily Mr. G. E. Studdy is a highly versatile humorous artist, and not an all-round animal caricaturist in the accepted sense of the term. He is, however, the creator of one of the funniest animals that have ever appeared in print, and an article of this nature would be incomplete without mention of the Studdy dog.

"One for his nob!"

This canny little fellow first appeared in the form of a tailpiece in a boys' paper, and it was the unexpected popularity of this modest effort that led to the development of the dog caricatures of which specimens appear herewith.

"I am not a highly-skilled draughtsman," said Mr. Studdy, with characteristic modesty, "and the dogs that I draw are entirely the outcome of my imagination, for I have never made any dog sketches from life. I have often been asked to what breed my particular type of animal belongs, but, to tell

you the truth, I'm not quite sure myself. He's just a composite impression of the many puppies I have observed. I aim to bring out the mischievous and semi-human expression that one so often sees in pups without destroying the natural characteristics of the animal, and I must admit that the subject has its limitations. If I could only let him use his paws—to handle a knife and fork, for example—I could select from a far greater range of subjects, but I am afraid that this would make him utterly unconvincing. As for my methods of work, I sometimes spend the first half of the day

"His Master's Vice."

lolling in an arm-chair, smoking cigarettes. The people at home seem to think that I am not working unless I am at my easel, or pacing up and down the room with wet towels round my head, but I can assure you that it is in the depths of that arm-chair that the hardest work of the day is done. Once I have developed an idea and turned it over in my head the actual execution of the drawing is comparatively simple."

Although he has been well known as an animal caricaturist and a writer of humorous articles on animal life for some years, it was whilst on service in France that Mr. L. R. Brightwell attained prominence on account of his first-hand studies of the Army mule.

His first drawing of this kind depicted the joy and envy of a line of mules as they watched their hero succeed in kicking—first the corporal, then the sergeant, then the

"Somebody cares."

"Who's calling me names?"

The kick

sergeant-major, and so on, until he reached the height of his ambition by kicking the colonel himself.

In the first two drawings, entitled "The Kick that Failed," the by-play of the lesser animals is worthy of mention, whilst the lower drawing is an amusing example of the artist's ability in caricaturing mulish facial expression.

Mr. Brightwell tells of a number of amusing experiences in connection with mules. Here is one of them.

The camp was greatly concerned about the large number of mules that had contrived to gnaw through the ropes to which they were tethered and break loose in the night. Mr. Brightwell discovered that the animals had a great aversion for a certain sticky substance which he kept in his hut, and which was primarily intended for making fly-catchers. Experiments proved that if this substance were smeared upon the ropes the mules would leave it severely alone.

One dark night, whilst Mr. Brightwell was engaged elsewhere, one of the picket entered his hut, found the tin of sticky substance, and proceeded to smear it over the ropes with a stick. But by the morning every mule in the line had gnawed through the rope and made good its escape!

that failed.

In furious anger the picket descended in a body upon Mr. Brightwell, and the sound of Army language filled the air.

Greatly puzzled, the latter climbed up and looked along his shelf. The tin of fly-catcher was still there. Then the light of understanding came into his eyes.

The picket had taken his golden syrup!

"Clicked again! We've got a job at the corn-dealer's."

HEROINES NEW and OLD

by E. T. RAYMOND

Author of "Uncensored Celebrities," etc., etc.

CATRIONA.

"Catriona."—R. L. Stevenson.

After the black-and-white drawing by G. C. Wilmshurst.

READING a novel the other day, I became conscious of something missing, and on consideration I found it was the heroine. There was, of course, a "principal girl," as they call it in the pantomime programmes. But she was little more than something for the hero to put his arms round and say passionate things to. She resembled the young lady who, reproved by the vicar for excessive addiction to the ball-room, replied that the modern fashion made her "more danced against than dancing." She lacked life, was spiritually inert; an American might put it more tersely by saying there was "nawthin' to her."

BELLA WILFER.

"Our Mutual Friend."—Charles Dickens.

Drawn by W. Smithson Broadhead.

Then I tried to remember a few heroines in British fiction *with* something to them, and was surprised to find how small a band they really are. Thackeray called "Vanity Fair" a "Novel without a Hero." Nine-tenths of the novels of his time and earlier—and for that matter most novels since—might be labelled "A Story with a Sort of Heroine."

Why should so many great men have failed to make the central female characters of their finest works sufficiently vital to be remembered? The fact can hardly be gainsaid. Who could quote what Miss Nickleby said to Sir Mulberry Hawk, or describe exactly how Mary Graham comforted Martin Chuzzlewit and fascinated poor Tom Pinch, or recall what passed between Little Dorrit and Clennam to make him forget the other girl who *would* go and marry the bad artist? Ask what Mr. Pickwick said to Peter Magnus when he explained that he signed himself "Afternoon" in notes to intimate friends, or how Dick Swiveller finished up the quotation about the dear gazelle, and the eye of the real Dickens-lover will light with reminiscent joy. I am not

TESS.

"Tess of the D'Urbervilles."—Thomas Hardy.
After the black-and-white drawing by G. C. Wilmshurst.

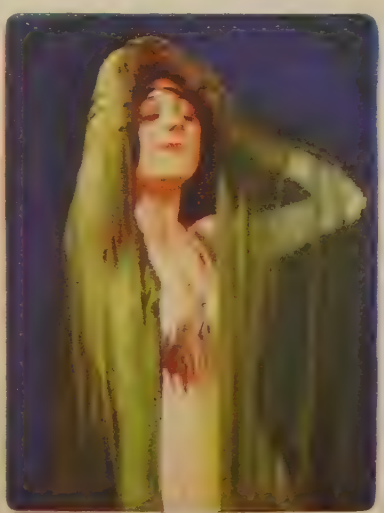
thinking of such phenomenal men as Mr. G. K. Chesterton, who knows every good thing in Dickens, and can explain exactly how Sam Weller and Silas Wegg could not have happened but for the Middle Ages. I am thinking of the quite average person of good memory who likes Dickens. But I doubt whether Mr. Chesterton himself could say off-hand who was the heroine of "Oliver Twist," or why she would not marry the swell young clergyman when he asked her first. Of course, any Dickens lover could tell us all about Bella Wilfer, the heroine of "Our Mutual Friend," but she is an exception. No reader can forget Bella—whether he likes her or not is another question.

It was assuredly not from poverty of imagination, or want of knowledge in women, that Dickens thus failed in his heroines. He has created many immortal female types; if in his great picture-gallery the men predominate, in quality some of his women need fear no comparison. Take, for example, Mrs. Micawber, with her faded

TRILBY.

"Trilby."—G. du Maurier.
Drawn by S. Abbey.

gentility and her fatuous lucidity. Take from the same book the adorable Betsy Trotwood. Take the decorously dismal wife of Mr. "Rumty" Wilfer in "Our Mutual Friend." Take Mrs. Joe Gargery, with her tendency to go "on the rampage"; Mrs. Todgers, lean with cares of gravy; Mrs. General, with her "peas, potatoes, prunes, and prisms" nicety of pronunciation and deportment; and Mrs. Gamp, with her "dispogician" to short drinks and long cucumbers. Dickens assuredly knew the sex.



SHE.

"She."—H. Rider Haggard.
Drawn by W. E. Wightman.

But somehow he never managed to get sex and sense properly mixed in his heroines. Either they are all sex and no sense, as in the case of the Dombey girl, or all sense and no sex, as in the case of Agnes Wickfield. If they do not talk pure novelette they talk pure

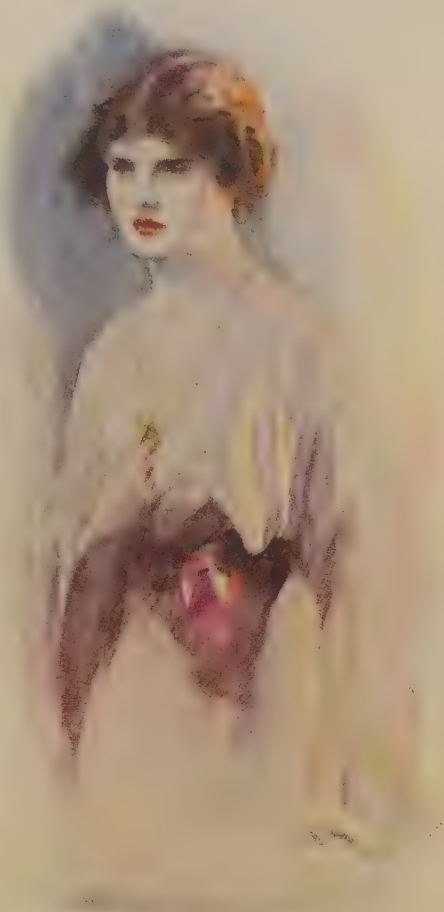
leading article. Kate Nickleby talks leading article, staving off the tempter in three irreproachable paragraphs, with a clincher in the last sentence. She could not possibly have been the child of delightful, inconsequent, human Mrs. Nickleby.

To me the only Dickens heroine in the smallest degree memorable is one who has hardly a legitimate claim to be a heroine at all, being in fact only a foil to the real heroine—I mean Dora Spenlow, who became the first Mrs. Copperfield. "She is what is called a stupid, still distinctly she's a duck," sings one of the Gondoliers. Dora is not clever, but I will hold under persecution that she is a duck. Every spring, as the lilac comes out, I have some little thought of Dora, and can see her sitting under the tree in the north-west corner of my garden, in the very straw hat with blue ribbons which robbed David Copperfield of his senses.

BABBIE.

"The Little Minister."—J. M. Barrie.

After the black-and-white drawing by G. C. Wilmshurst.



DOMINI ENFILDEN.

"The Garden of Allah."—Robert Hichens.

Drawn by W. E. Webster.

I suppose everybody has wooed little Dora in the person of David, only to renounce all identity with that miserable man when he begins to tire of his prize. No doubt Dora did not shine as a cook, and her mutton was underdone. But who would not prefer her to the businesslike Agnes, who could no doubt run a

ANN VERONICA.
"Ann Veronica."
—H. G. Wells.
Drawn by P. B. Hickling.

syndicate of chop-houses without turning a hair? Chops, gentlemen, and tomato sauce—what are these compared with smiles and sun-bonnets such as Dora affected?

Dora is the one Dickens heroine who does not bore. Thackeray was poorer; he could not boast one. What terrible people they are—his perfect gentlewomen, his Amelias, and Lauras, and Lady Castlewoods, with their sensibilities and gentilities. Thackeray had a keen enough eye for female character when it was not too goody-goody or too refined; the Frenchified Blanche Amory and the delightful, worldly old Miss Crawley are each capital in their way; while who can help loving Becky Sharp, even when she is reduced to the Frankfort sausages and the lager beer? But Thackeray, like Dickens, seems always ill at ease in the presence of his "nice" women; he seems to be terribly afraid that if he made them a little genuine they would kick up their heels and disgrace him in the eyes of the Victorian middle classes.

The one heroine round about that time and later about whose humanity there is no possible doubt is Jane Eyre. George Eliot's young women are made out of the most superlative wax, with talking arrangements that evoke admiration, but they are dolls still; Charles Reade orders stock sizes from some wholesale house of fiction suppliers guaranteed to suit all requirements; Wilkie Collins, intent on the mechanical part of his story, cares little for flesh and blood. But Jane Eyre is the genuine article. In her the life surges and palpitates. Charlotte Brontë could not reproduce the miracle; whether the Victorian mood conquered, or whether she tried to do more than was in her, I do not pretend to say, but "Villette" and "Shirley" have no woman like Jane Eyre.

And Jane is the more wonderful because there is really little in the novel as a tale. Those adventures of hers fail to thrill a generation accustomed to stronger meat. The mad wife is rather poor melodrama; Fairfax Rochester verges on farce; the whole business of Blanche Ingram constantly topples on the very edge of bathos.

CHRISTINA WYNDHAM.
"The Rocks of Valpré."—Ethel M. Dell.
Drawn by J. E. Sutcliffe.

The early-Victorian hangings are faded and yellow; only the fiery reality of the human heart in that Quakerish governess remains. "Jane Eyre" is not only a novel with a heroine; the heroine is all the novel. Nobody cares a jot what happens to Rochester for his own sake; but what proper-minded person would feel life any other than a tasteless and hollow thing if the book failed to end up with Jane seated on his knee, and looking forward to a really comfortable house full of antimacassars, whatnots, and babies?

ANTHONY TROLLOPE is often called a minor Thackeray; I should call him a very minor one. But in the single article of his gentlewomen heroines he seems to me greatly superior to his master. They are not "great ladies," but just comfortable people like the rest of us, and much better bred than Thackeray's nice women, who are perpetually advertising their breeding.

Thackeray could have done much more than Trollope with the Earl's daughter in "The Small House at Allington"—and not only with the daughter, but with her papa and her mamma, and her sisters and her cousins and her aunts. It would be a joy to have the book re-written by the great William Makepeace from the point of view of the ambitious Civil Servant who married for position and found it—under the thumbs of all his wife's relatives.

But Thackeray could not have given us an appealing little victim like Lily Dale, who loves with passion and loses with dignity. One is willing to be with her in her first heartache; with Thackeray's heroines one wants to get out of the room when they begin to sniff. And, while one feels sorry that honest little Johnny Eames cannot fill the gap left by Crosbie's treason, one is rather glad that she didn't try the impossible.

Lily Dale is met with again and again in Trollope, and we always fall in love with her—not head over heels, perhaps, but quite decisively. Trollope was not a great writer, and did not pretend to be one. But he is one of the very few English novelists who have created women much as one knows them—creatures with a warm circulating medium, but also with a wholesome objection to slop over emotionally in public.

After Trollope we find a desert belt, and until the more modern school is reached there are few distinctive heroines. Sir Rider Haggard, in "She," is reduced to creating a female Phœnix, with an engaging habit of disappearing in flames. "Ouida's" heroes (who fling away cigars, leap into eights, and "stroke" them to victory) used to be known to all; "Ouida's" heroines never outlived the "ten days allowed for the reading of this book." R. L. Stevenson excelled chiefly in male types, though the heroine of "Catriona," with the touch of pathos that always resides in Scottish picturesqueness, has something of the art of Scott in his more inspired moods. On the other hand we have, as typical of the heroines of Sir James Barrie's early manner, the fascinating Babbie, with the usual Barrie inclination to fall in love with a poor man. Babbie, however, like most of Sir James's women, is charming in a Dresden china way; one never feels that she wears real stays and gets into real tempers.

BUT want of individuality cannot be charged against the females of two great men who attained the plenitude of their powers during the last two decades of the nineteenth century. The heroines of George Meredith were spiritually a little before their time. They are nearly all still "new" women, full of ideas, full of clever talk, full of revolt, but—unlike some later specimens of the genus—by no means revolting. Sometimes they are genuine women enough, sometimes they are only intellects in petticoats. They do not lack physical attraction; Renée in "Beauchamp's Career" is "the brunette of the fine lineaments"; "Diana of the Crossways" is goddess-like in figure; Letitia Dale, in "The Egoist," "has a romantic tale upon her eyelashes." But their main strength lies in repartee. They are great at "answering back," and are always smart, if not invariably comprehensible. Diana, for example, made the oft-quoted remark that "men have rounded Seraglio Point, but have not yet doubled Cape Turk"—which comprises so many people's whole acquaintance with the genius of Meredith. It was Diana, again, who declared (just before being married) that "the thought of a husband cuts one from any dreaming. It's all dead flat earth at once."

On the whole the Meredithian heroines, though they can reason, are rather unreasonable. They are gauzy-winged, untamable creatures, gyrating lightly above depths of passion and reality, and give their men rather a bad time. "Woman," says Meredith, "is the last thing for man to civilize," and there is no telling what his particular women will do. They belong, of course, to the West-end and the country-house; but Meredith, who sedulously concealed the dread fact that his father was a tailor, was no realist as far as the upper classes were concerned, and at no time have epigrams been so plentiful in real society as in his rather tiresomely clever circle.

Meredith wrote in the spirit of comedy.

A deeper and more sombre note is struck by the second writer of genius who broke in on the older tradition of the immaculate and irreproachable heroine. "Tess of the D'Urbervilles" is described by Mr. Hardy as a "pure woman." She is at least purely woman; none other is more genuine. Opulent in her style of beauty (does not the seducer specially praise her as "crummy!"?) low-born but well descended, predestined by her circumstances to a stormy passage through life, she moves in that atmosphere of mingled realism and glamour we noted in "Jane Eyre"—a glamour in which the most polished creations of Meredith are wholly deficient. Nobody really cares what happens to Diana and the rest; but the fate of Tess is a matter of poignant personal concern to any well-constituted mind. The professional pessimists leave us able to think of the world as a very pleasant place after all. But when Mr. Hardy fits a rope round a neck so meet for the truest lover's embrace, one seems to see life as something ugly and sinister. I fancy no intelligent being ever felt quite the same after finishing "Tess." I fancy also that most readers cherish a grudge against the gifted author; there is something terribly cold-blooded in such infanticide. Has Mr. Hardy ever experienced remorse over that foul murder, and especially over the sardonic quality of it?

DU MAURIER'S Trilby, on the other hand, was so obviously created only to be killed that one bears up surprisingly when the fatal moment arrives. Such is the difference between grim genius and graceful talent. But Trilby—the Bohemian heroine of the "Dame aux Camélias" type, very much anglicized and sugared to taste—did really form a landmark in English fiction; the thing had never been done at once so vividly and so delicately; and for some year or two the people of the 'nineties fairly revelled in Quartier Latin, the "altogether," absinthe, Little Billee, and the sinister Svengali. But each enthusiasm in due course induces a reaction. The revolt against the type du Maurier popularized, the warm-hearted and light-natured young person with "no harm in her," found due expression in Mr. Compton Mackenzie's Sylvia Scarlett, whose sins matched her name, and were committed simply because she found them amusing. If a hussy, she was at least an honest and vigorous one; and instead of dying, like Trilby, she marries in the end "quite reg'lar at St. George's"—only I fancy it was not St. George's.

Everything Mr. Wells does is likely to be original, and though his naughty heroines do the usual naughty things, they do them in quite their own way. Ann Veronica started a discussion and almost a fashion. Suburban and respectable, she wants to "lead her own life," and leads it in rather specialized fashion by falling in love with a married demonstrator of science. The accent on science is the special Wellsian touch. The young lady herself has marked scientific leanings; she has studied biology, or the science of life, and (apparently as a direct consequence) wants to "see life." A superficial reader might almost be left with the impression that full knowledge of the habits of the amœba naturally implies a just disrespect for the standard of propriety prevalent in the less exciting suburbs of London. But that is not Mr. Wells's special point. In this and other books he is really discussing love from the angle of economics. A woman who has no money and cannot earn her own living is at the mercy of any old-fashioned papa, unless she gets some other man to keep her; in other words, she is denied true liberty and true love. Moral: Do not complain that there is sometimes too much human nature in woman, but alter your economics.

Amanda, in "The Research Magnificent," is Ann under another name. "Life," she tells the hero, "is like a feast; it is spread before everybody, and nobody must touch it. What am I? Just a prisoner. In a cottage garden. Looking for ever over a hedge. I should be happier if I couldn't look." Most of Mr. Wells's insurgent young women talk in this way; they fall in love with scientists or men interested in Socialism, and go away for their honeymoons (if they happen to descend to such conventionalities) to places like Croatia. Otherwise they tend to "manifest decision of character," emphatic conversation in short, beautifully finished sentences, with plenty of full stops and occasionally pauses expressed by stars, to "glowing faces" with eyebrows "like a quick stroke of a camel's hair brush," and a style of dress unknown in Hanover Square or Sloane Street; one of them, according to Mr. Wells, displayed to the watching world a "short petticoat," worn for freedom of movement.

MORE ordinary are Mr. Bennett's women. They are really of two types only—the woman who loves, and is only interested in a man as a lover, and the capable woman who pushes her lover on to "do things"—which in Mr. Bennett's philosophy is to make money and reputation. Such a woman would be to Mr. Wells a mere nuisance, since she would take her husband away from the science he should study for its own sake and turn him into a mere money-grubber. For Mr. Bennett's heroes, who are strictly business men, though

occasionally artists by profession, she is a true help-meet.

All these are realists of a kind. Sir Hall Caine and Sir Anthony Hope Hawkins give us the older heroine of romance in new, or at least refurbished, dress. Donna Roma Volonna, in "The Eternal City," "intoxicates a whole capital" with "her light play of grace and a whole artillery of love in her lovely eyes," takes captive a Prime Minister, but "drops her eyes" and succumbs like a schoolgirl to the virtuous hero, and dies penitent, with her large eyes "heavy with pain" but "full of joy." Mixed up with her story is a summary of modern Italian history, some vivid descriptions of scenery, society, and hosiery, and a quantity of elementary conversational Italian. Anthony Hope is less melting and more vivacious. His heroines, whether queens like Flavia or beautiful wild Greeks like Phroso, suggest what anybody might infer from the "Dolly Dialogues," that though Anthony Hope invented Ruritania, he peopled it with good English stock he had studied closely in London. He writes with the convincing awe of the Court newsman, but with the style of a witty and satiric man about town.

PERHAPS it was in revolt against this outbreak of romanticism that Mr. Benson set about the creation of Dodo, which started the cult of the sometimes rather ugly, always very earthy and worldly, cold-blooded but riotous tomboy of good society. Dodo was very cynical and dashing, but when she reappears in "Dodo the Second," the really young people ask her to tell them about "those delicious Victorian days of 1890, when you were a girl and people thought you were fast and were shocked." Mr. Stephen McKenna's Sonia is of the Dodo type brought quite up to date—shrewd, calculating, rather rowdy, knowing what she wants and determined to get it, going very far indeed, but never too far.

But while olives and salted almonds are liked by many, the taste for sweets is general and insistent, and romance always holds a large part of the field. Mr. W. J. Locke and Mr. Hichens are among its most successful modern exponents. They believe in the old recipe of "sugar and spice and all things nice"; they only differ as to proportion in the ingredients. Mr. Locke's heroines are all either ethereal blondes, incredibly innocent, or wild, impudent little brunettes, like the heroine of "The Morals of Marcus Ordeyne." Mr. Hichens mixes a little mysticism with his Turkish delight. In "The Garden of Allah" we have a heroine with probably the worst name in modern fiction, Domini Enfilden, and a Trappist monk called Boris Androvsky. They meet in Algeria, marry, and are just beginning to weary the most hardened reader by their perfectly unabashed bliss when Boris is recognized, and Domini tells him he must go back without her, though he will "always have her heart." It is the old "'twixt love and duty business" of "The Prisoner of Zenda," with a difference. For Domini is altogether a more expansive and explosive mixture than Queen Flavia.

Miss Ethel M. Dell's recipe is the nice-looking girl who first rebels and then yields to an ugly and masterful hero; although, it is true, Trevor Mordaunt, in "The Rocks of Valpré," of which Christina Wyndham is the heroine, was not exactly ugly. A very typical case is the girl in "The Way of an Eagle." Muriel Roscoe has been given in charge of Captain Nick Ratcliffe, a strong, silent man, in order that she shall escape natives who are besieging a small fort on the Indian frontier. She is unwilling to go, but Ratcliffe forces on her a sleeping draught, and when she awakes she finds herself alone with him on the mountains, whence, after killing an Indian pursuer, he leads her to Simla and civilization. She loves him, she loves him not; he does love her consistently, though, of course, awkwardly, and, like all these awkward men, finally gets his way. "Why do they make us bully the women so?" asked Thackeray, concerning the lady novelists of his time. Miss Dell seems to have no little of the Brontës' fancy for the masterful and bullying kind of virility; and the philosophy of her love-making seems to be that women are a little like dogs—"the more you beat 'em the better they like you." It is curious, by the way, to note that purveyors to the masses specialize in heroines who are pursued by their lovers, while the more "literary" novelists make the women do all the wooing; "Apollo flies, while Daphne holds the chase." Which is nearer to life?

ONE last question. Is a heroine necessary at all? Mr. Kipling, who is after all still, perhaps, the most popular author of the day, seems to think not. No great master of fiction is so poor in heroines. Indeed, I can only think of a single approach to one—Maisie in "The Light that Failed." And even she illustrates what seems to be the author's fixed opinion—that a woman is an obstacle to a man in the one thing about him that matters, his work. In Mr. Kipling, with his amazing hold on the public and his disregard for what is generally considered its most vulnerable spot, the would-be "best seller" has something to think over. Is it the heroine that really makes the book?

Sundered Hearts

by

P. G. WODEHOUSE

ILLUSTRATED BY
E H SHEPARD

IN the smoking-room of the club-house a cheerful fire was burning, and the Oldest Member glanced from time to time out of the window into the gathering dusk. Snow was falling lightly on the links. From where he sat, the Oldest Member had a good view of the ninth green; and presently, out of the greyness of the December evening, there appeared over the brow of the hill a golf-ball. It trickled across the green, and stopped within a yard of the hole. The Oldest Member nodded approvingly. A good approach-shot.

A young man in a tweed suit clambered on to the green, holed out with easy confidence, and, shouldering his bag, made his way to the club-house. A few moments later he entered the smoking-room, and uttered an exclamation of rapture at the sight of the fire.

"I'm frozen stiff!"

He rang for a waiter and ordered a hot drink. The Oldest Member gave a gracious assent to the suggestion that he should join him.

"I like playing in winter," said the young man. "You get the course to yourself, for the world is full of slackers who only turn out when the weather suits them. I cannot understand where they get the nerve to call themselves golfers."

"Not everyone is as keen as you are, my boy," said the Sage, dipping gratefully into his hot drink. "If they were, the world would be a better place, and we should hear less of all this modern unrest."

"I *am* pretty keen," admitted the young man.

"I have only encountered one man whom I could describe as keener. I allude to Mortimer Sturgis."

"The fellow who took up golf at thirty-eight and let the girl he was engaged to marry go off with someone else because he hadn't the time to combine golf with courtship? I remember. You were telling me about him the other day."

"There is a sequel to that story, if you would care to hear it," said the Oldest Member.

"You have the honour," said the young man. "Go ahead!"

Some people (began the Oldest Member) considered that Mortimer Sturgis was too wrapped up in golf, and blamed him for it. I could never see eye to eye with them. In the days of King Arthur nobody thought the worse of a young knight if he suspended all his social and business engagements in favour of a search for the Holy Grail. In the Middle Ages a man could devote his whole life to the Crusades, and the public fawned upon him. Why, then, blame the man of to-day for a zealous attention to the modern equivalent, the Quest of Scratch? Mortimer Sturgis never became a scratch player, but he did eventually get his handicap down to nine, and I honour him for it.

The story which I am about to tell begins in what might be called the middle period of Sturgis's career. He had reached the stage when his handicap was a wobbly twelve; and, as you are no doubt aware, it is then that a man really begins to golf in the true sense of the word. Mortimer's fondness for the game until then had been merely tepid compared with what it now became. He had played a little before, but now he really buckled to and got down to it. It was at this point, too, that he began once more to entertain thoughts of marriage.

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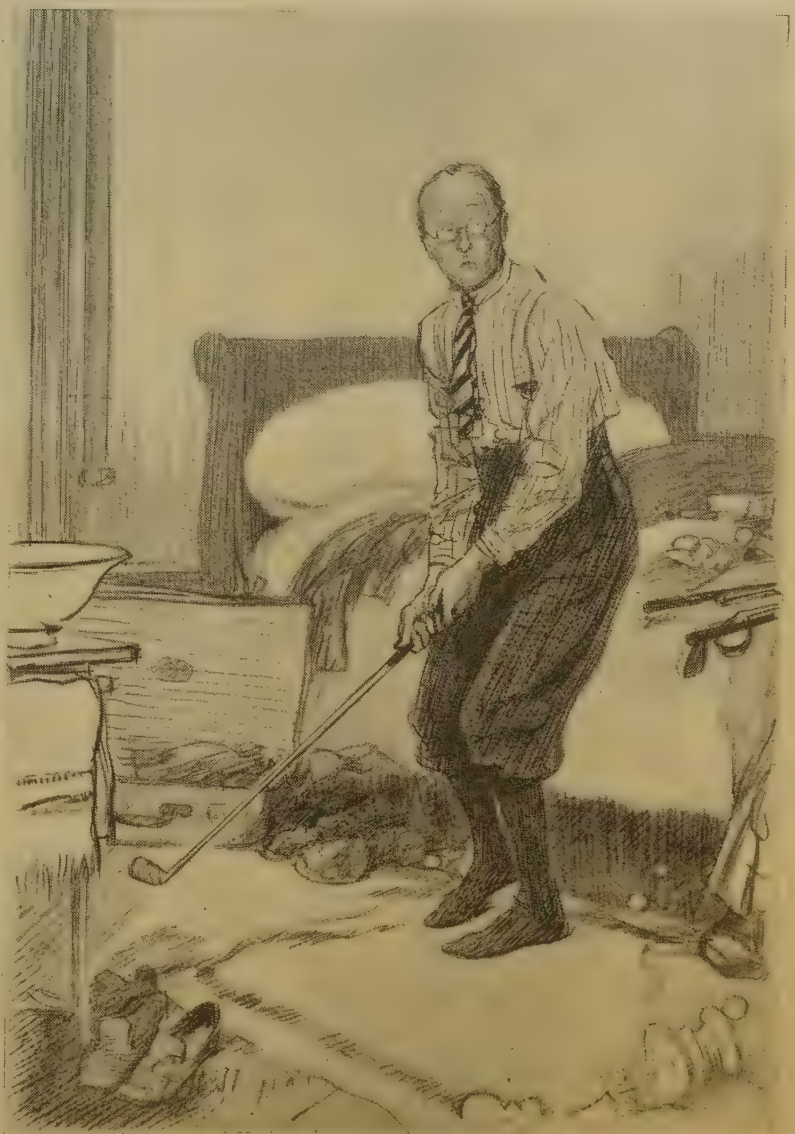
A profound statistician in this one department, he had discovered that practically all the finest exponents of the art are married men; and the thought that there might be something in the holy state which improved a man's game, and that he was missing a good thing, troubled him a great deal. Moreover, the paternal instinct had awakened in him. As he justly pointed out, whether marriage improved your game or not, it was to Old Tom Morris's marriage that the existence of young Tommy Morris, winner of the British Open Championship four times in succession, could be directly traced. In fact, at the age of forty-two, Mortimer Sturgis was in just the frame of mind to take some nice girl aside and ask her to become a step-mother to his eleven drivers, his baffy, his twenty-eight putters, and the rest of the ninety-four clubs which he had accumulated in the course of his golfing career. The sole stipulation, of course, which he made when dreaming his day-dreams was that the future Mrs. Sturgis must be a golfer. I can still recall the horror in his face when one girl, admirable in other respects, said that she had never heard of Harry Vardon, and didn't he mean Dolly Varden? She has since proved an excellent wife and mother, but Mortimer Sturgis never spoke to her again.

With the coming of January, it was Mortimer's practice to leave England and go to the South of France, where there was sunshine and crisp dry turf. He pursued his usual custom this year. With his suit-case and his ninety-four clubs he went off to Saint Brule, staying as he always did at the Hotel Superbe, where they knew him, and treated with an amiable tolerance his habit of practising chip-shots in his bedroom. On the first evening, after breaking a statuette of the Infant Samuel in Prayer, he dressed and went down to dinner. And the first thing he saw was Her.

Mortimer Sturgis, as you know, had been engaged before, but Betty Weston had never inspired the tumultuous rush of emotion which the mere sight of this girl had set loose in him. He told me later that



"On the first evening, after breaking a statuette of the Infant Samuel in Prayer, he dressed and went down to dinner."

just to watch her holing out her soup gave him the sort of feeling you get when your drive collides with a rock in the middle of a tangle of rough and kicks back into the middle of the fairway. If golf had come late in life to Mortimer Sturgis, love came later still, and just as the golf, attacking him in the middle life, had been some golf, so was the love considerable love. Mortimer finished his dinner in a trance, which is the best way to do it at some hotels, and then scoured the place for someone who would introduce him. He found such a person eventually and the meeting took place.

SHE was a small and rather fragile-looking girl, with big blue eyes and a cloud of golden hair. She had a sweet expression, and her left wrist was in a sling. She looked up at Mortimer as if she had at last found something that amounted to something. I am inclined to think it was a case of love at first sight on both sides.

"Fine weather we're having," said Mortimer, who was a capital conversationalist.

"Yes," said the girl.

"I like fine weather."

"So do I."

"There's something about fine weather!"

"Yes."

"It's—it's—well, fine weather's so much finer than weather that isn't fine," said Mortimer.

He looked at the girl a little anxiously, fearing he might be taking her out of her depth, but she seemed to have followed his train of thought perfectly.

"Yes, isn't it?" she said. "It's so—so fine."

"That's just what I meant," said Mortimer. "So fine. You've just hit it."

He was charmed. The combination of beauty with intelligence is so rare.

"I see you've hurt your wrist," he went on, pointing to the sling.

"Yes. I strained it a little playing in the championship."

"The championship?" Mortimer was interested. "It's awfully rude of me," he said, apologetically, "but I didn't catch your name just now."

"My name is Somerset."

Mortimer had been bending forward solicitously. He overbalanced and nearly fell off his chair. The shock had been stunning. Even before he had met and spoken to her, he had told himself that he loved this girl with the stored-up love of a lifetime. And she was Mary Somerset! The hotel lobby danced before Mortimer's eyes.

The name will, of course, be familiar to you. In the early rounds of the Ladies' Open Golf Championship of that year nobody had paid much attention to Mary Somerset. She had survived her first two matches, but her opponents had been nonentities like herself. And then, in the third round, she had met and defeated the champion. From that point on, her name was on everybody's lips. She became favourite. And she had justified the public confidence by sailing into the final and winning it easily. And here she was, talking to him like an ordinary person, and, if he could read the message in her eyes, not altogether indifferent to his charms, if you could call them that.

"Golly!" said Mortimer, awed.

THEIR friendship ripened rapidly, as friendships do in the South of France. In that favoured clime, you find the girl and Nature does the rest. On the second morning of their acquaintance Mortimer invited her to walk round the links with him and watch him play. He did it a little diffidently, for his golf was not of the calibre that would be likely to extort admiration from a champion. On the other hand, one should never let slip the opportunity of acquiring wrinkles on the game, and he thought that Miss Somerset, if she watched one or two of his shots, might tell him just what he ought to do. And sure enough, the opening arrived on the fourth hole, where Mortimer, after a drive which surprised even himself, found his ball in a nasty cuppy lie.

He turned to the girl.

"What ought I to do here?" he asked.

Miss Somerset looked at the ball. She seemed to be weighing the matter in her mind.

"Give it a good hard knock," she said.

Mortimer knew what she meant. She was advocating a full iron. The only trouble was that, when he tried anything more ambitious than a half-swing, except off the tee, he almost invariably topped. However, he could not fail this wonderful girl, so he swung well back and took a chance. His enterprise was rewarded. The ball flew out of the indentation in the turf as cleanly as though John Henry Taylor had been behind it, and rolled, looking neither to left nor to right, straight for the pin. A few moments later Mortimer Sturgis had holed out one under bogey, and it was only the fear that, having known him for so short a time, she might be startled and refuse him that kept him from proposing then and there. This exhibition of golfing generalship on her part had removed his last doubts. He knew that, if he lived for ever, there could be no other girl in the world for him. With her at his side, what might he not do? He might get his handicap down to six—to three—to scratch—to plus something! Good heavens, why, even the Amateur Championship was not outside the range of possibility. Mortimer

Sturgis shook his putter solemnly in the air, and vowed a silent vow that he would win this pearl among women.

Now, when a man feels like that, it is impossible to restrain him long. For a week Mortimer Sturgis's soul sizzled within him: then he could contain himself no longer. One night, at one of the informal dances at the hotel, he drew the girl out on to the moonlit terrace.

"Miss Somerset——" he began, stuttering with emotion like an imperfectly-corked bottle of ginger-beer. "Miss Somerset—may I call you Mary?"

The girl looked at him with eyes that shone softly in the dim light.

"Mary?" she repeated. "Why, of course, if you like——"

"If I like!" cried Mortimer. "Don't you know that it is my dearest wish? Don't you know that I would rather be permitted to call you Mary than do the first hole at Muirfield in two? Oh, Mary, how I have longed for this moment! I love you! I love you! Ever since I met you I have known that you were the one girl in this vast world whom I would die to win! Mary, will you be mine? Shall we go round together? Will you fix up a match with me on the links of life which shall end only when the Grim Reaper lays us both a stymie?"

She drooped towards him.

"Mortimer!" she murmured.

He held out his arms, then drew back. His face had grown suddenly tense, and there were lines of pain about his mouth.

"Wait!" he said, in a strained voice. "Mary, I love you dearly, and because I love you so dearly I cannot let you trust your sweet life to me blindly. I have a confession to make. I am not—I have not always been"—he paused—"a good man," he said, in a low voice.

She started indignantly.

"How can you say that? You are the best, the kindest, the bravest man I have ever met! Who but a good man would have risked his life to save me from drowning?"

"Drowning?" Mortimer's voice seemed perplexed. "You? What do you mean?"

"Have you forgotten the time when I fell in the sea last week, and you jumped in with all your clothes on——"

"Of course, yes," said Mortimer. "I remember now. It was the day I did the long seventh in five. I got off a good tee-shot straight down the fairway, took a baffy for my second, and—— But that is not the point. It is sweet and generous of you to think so highly of what was the merest commonplace act of ordinary politeness, but I must repeat that, judged by the standards of your snowy purity, I am not a good man. I do not come to you clean and spotless as a young girl should expect her husband to come to her. Once, playing in a foursome, my ball fell in some long grass. Nobody was near me. We had no caddies, and the others were on the fairway. God knows——" His voice shook. "God knows I struggled against the temptation. But I fell. I kicked the ball on to a little bare mound, from which it was an easy task with a nice half-mashie to reach the green for a snappy seven. Mary, there have been times when, going round by myself, I have allowed myself ten-foot putts on three holes in succession, simply in order to be able to say I had done the course in under a hundred. Ah! you shrink from me! You are disgusted!"

"I'm not disgusted! And I don't shrink! I only shivered because it is rather cold."

"Then you can love me in spite of my past?"

"Mortimer!"

She fell into his arms.

"My dearest," he said, presently, "what a happy life ours will be. That is, if you do not find that you have made a mistake."

"A mistake!" she cried, scornfully.

"Well, my handicap is twelve, you know, and not so darned twelve at that. There are days when I play my second from the fairway of the next hole but one, days when I couldn't putt into a coal-hole with 'Welcome!' written over it. And you are a Ladies' Open Champion. Still, if you think it's all right —— Oh, Mary, you little know how I have dreamed of some day marrying a really first-class golfer! Yes, that was my vision—of walking up the aisle with some sweet plus two girl on my arm. You shivered again. You are catching cold."

"It is a little cold," said the girl. She spoke in a small voice.

"Let me take you in, sweetheart," said Mortimer. "I'll just put you in a comfortable chair with a nice cup of coffee, and then I think I really must come out again and tramp about and think how perfectly splendid everything is."

THEY were married a few weeks later, very quietly, in the little village church of Saint Brüle. The secretary of the local golf-club acted as best man for Mortimer, and a girl from the hotel was the only bridesmaid. The whole business was rather a disappointment to Mortimer, who had planned out a somewhat florid ceremony at St. George's, Hanover Square, with the Vicar of Tooting (a scratch player, excellent at short approach shots) officiating, and "The Voice That Breathed O'er St. Andrews" booming from the organ. He had even had the idea of copying the military wedding and escorting

his bride out of the church under an arch of crossed cleeks. But she would have none of this pomp. She insisted on a quiet wedding, and for the honeymoon trip preferred a tour through Italy. Mortimer, who had wanted to go to Scotland to visit the birthplace of James Braid, yielded amiably, for he loved her dearly. But he did not think much of Italy. In Rome, the great monuments of the past left him cold. Of the Temple of Vespasian, all he thought was that it would be a devil of a place to be bunkered behind. The Colosseum aroused a faint spark of interest in him, as he speculated whether Abe Mitchell would use a full brassey to carry it. In Florence, the view over the Tuscan Hills from the Torre Rosa, Fiesole, over which his bride waxed enthusiastic, seemed to him merely a nasty bit of rough which would take a deal of getting out of.

And so, in the fullness of time, they came home to Mortimer's cosy little house adjoining the links.

MORTIMER was so busy polishing his ninety-four clubs on the evening of their arrival that he failed to notice that his wife was preoccupied. A less busy man would have perceived at a glance that she was distinctly nervous. She started at sudden noises, and once, when he tried the newest of his mashie-niblicks and broke one of the drawing-room windows, she screamed sharply. In short, her manner was strange, and, if Edgar Allan Poe had put her into "The Fall Of The House Of Usher," she would have fitted it like the paper on the wall. She had the air of one waiting tensely for the approach of some imminent doom. Mortimer, humming gaily to himself as he sand-papered the blade of his twenty-second putter, observed nothing of this. He was thinking of the morrow's play.

"Your wrist's quite well again now, darling, isn't it?" he said.

"Yes. Yes, quite well."

"Fine!" said Mortimer. "We'll breakfast early—say at half-past seven—and then we'll be able to get in a couple of rounds before lunch. A couple more in the afternoon will about see us through. One doesn't want to over-golf oneself the first day." He swung the putter joyfully. "How had we better play, do you think? We might start with you giving me a half."

She did not speak. She was very pale. She clutched the arm of her chair tightly till the knuckles showed white under the skin.

To anybody but Mortimer her nervousness would have been even more obvious on the following morning, as they reached the first tee. Her eyes were dull and heavy, and she started when a grasshopper chirruped. But Mortimer was too occupied with thinking how jolly it was having the course to themselves to notice anything.

He scooped some sand out of the box, and took a ball out of her bag. His wedding-present to her had been a brand-new golf-bag, six dozen balls, and a full set of the most expensive clubs, all born in Scotland.

"Do you like a high tee?" he asked.

"Oh, no," she replied, coming with a start out of her thoughts. "Doctors say it's indigestible."

Mortimer laughed merrily.

"Deuced good!" he chuckled. "Is that your own or did you read it in a comic paper? There you are!" He placed the ball on a little hill of sand, and got up. "Now let's see some of that championship form of yours!"

She burst into tears.

"My darling!"

Mortimer ran to her and put his arms round her. She tried weakly to push him away.

"My angel! What is it?"

She sobbed brokenly. Then, with an effort, she spoke.

"Mortimer, I have deceived you!"

"Deceived me?"

"I have never played golf in my life! I don't even know how to hold the caddie!"

Mortimer's heart stood still. This sounded like the gibberings of an unbalanced mind, and no man likes his wife to begin gibbering immediately after the honeymoon.

"My precious! You are not yourself!"

"I am! That's the whole trouble! I'm myself and not the girl you thought I was!"

Mortimer stared at her, puzzled. He was thinking that it was a little difficult and that, to work it out properly, he would need a pencil and a bit of paper.

"My name is not Mary!"

"But you said it was."

"I didn't. You asked if you could call me Mary, and I said you might, because I loved you too much to deny your smallest whim. I was going on to say that it wasn't my name, but you interrupted me."

"Not Mary!" The horrid truth was coming home to Mortimer. "You were not Mary Somerset?"

"Mary is my cousin. My name is Mabel."

"But you said you had sprained your wrist playing in the championship."

"So I had. The mallet slipped in my hand."

"The mallet!" Mortimer clutched at his forehead. "You didn't say 'the mallet'?"

"Yes, Mortimer! The mallet!"

A faint blush of shame mantled her cheek, and into her blue eyes there came a look of pain, but she faced him bravely.

"Mortimer found his ball in a nasty cuppy lie. 'What ought I to do here?' he asked. 'Give it a good hard knock' she said."

"I am the Ladies' Open Croquet Champion!" she whispered.

Mortimer Sturgis cried aloud, a cry that was like the shriek of some wounded animal.

"Croquet!" He gulped, and stared at her with unseeing eyes. He was no prude, but he had those decent prejudices of which no self-respecting man can wholly rid himself, however broad-minded he may try to be. "Croquet!"

There was a long silence. The light breeze sang in the pines above them. The grasshoppers chirruped at their feet.

She began to speak again, in a low, monotonous voice.

"I blame myself! I should have told you before, while there was yet time for you to withdraw. I should have confessed this to you that night on the terrace in the moonlight. But you swept me off my feet, and I was in your arms before I realized what you would think of me. It was only then that I understood what my supposed skill at golf meant to you, and then it was too late. I loved you too much to let you go! I could not bear the thought of you recoiling from

me. Oh, I was mad—mad! I knew that I could not keep up the deception for ever, that you must find me out in time. But I had a wild hope that by then we should be so close to one another that you might find it in your heart to forgive. But I was wrong. I see it now. There are some things that no man can forgive. Some things," she repeated, dully, "which no man can forgive."

She turned away. Mortimer awoke from his trance.

"Stop!" he cried. "Don't go!"

"I must go."

"I want to talk this over."

She shook her head sadly and started to walk slowly across the sunlit grass. Mortimer watched her, his brain in a whirl of chaotic thoughts. She disappeared through the trees.

Mortimer sat down on the tee-box, and buried his face in his hands. For a time he could think of nothing but the cruel blow he had received. This was the end of those rainbow visions of himself and her going through life side by side, she lovingly criticizing his stance and his back-swing, he learning wisdom from her. A croquet-player! He was married to a woman who hit coloured balls through hoops. Mortimer Sturgis writhed in torment. A strong man's agony.

The mood passed. How long it had lasted, he did not know. But suddenly, as he sat there, he became once more aware of the glow of the sunshine and the singing of the birds. It was as if a shadow had lifted. Hope and optimism crept into his heart.

He loved her. He loved her still. She was part of him, and nothing that she could do had power to alter that. She had deceived him, yes. But why had she deceived him? Because she loved him so much that she could not bear to lose him. Dash it all, it was a bit of a compliment.

And, after all, poor girl, was it her fault? Was it not rather the fault of her upbringing? Probably she had been taught to play croquet when a mere child, hardly able to distinguish right from wrong. No steps had been taken to eradicate the virus from her system, and the thing had become chronic. Could she be blamed? Was she not more to be pitied than censured?

Mortimer rose to his feet, his heart swelling with generous forgiveness. The black horror had passed from him. The future seemed once more bright. It was not too late. She was still young, many years younger than he himself had been when he took up golf, and surely, if she put herself into the hands of a good specialist and practised every day, she might still hope to become a fair player. He reached the house and ran in, calling her name.

No answer came. He sped from room to room, but all were empty.

She had gone. The house was there. The furniture was there. The canary sang in its cage, the cook in the kitchen. The pictures still hung on the walls. But she had gone. Everything was at home except his wife.

Finally, propped up against the cup he had once won in a handicap competition, he saw a letter. With a sinking heart he tore open the envelope.

It was a pathetic, a tragic letter, the letter of a woman endeavouring to express all the anguish of a torn heart with one of those fountain-pens which suspend the flow of ink about twice in every three words. The gist of it was that she felt she had wronged him; that, though he might forgive, he could never forget; and that she was going away, away out into the world, alone.

Mortimer sank into a chair, and stared blankly before him. She had scratched the match.

I AM not a married man myself, so have had no experience of how it feels to have one's wife whizz off silently into the unknown; but I should imagine that it must be something like taking a full swing with a brassey and missing the ball. Something, I take it, of the same sense of mingled shock, chagrin, and the feeling that nobody loves one, which attacks a man in such circumstances, must come to the bereaved husband. And one can readily understand how terribly the incident must have shaken Mortimer Sturgis. I was away at the time, but I am told by those who saw him that his game went all to pieces.

He had never shown much indication of becoming anything in the nature of a first-class golfer, but he had managed to acquire one or two decent shots. His work with the light iron was not at all bad, and he was a fairly steady putter. But now, under the shadow of this tragedy, he dropped right back to the form of his earliest period. It was a pitiful sight to see this gaunt, haggard man with the look of dumb anguish behind his spectacles taking as many as three shots sometimes to get past the ladies' tee. His slice, of which he had almost cured himself, returned with such virulence that in the list of ordinary hazards he had now to include the tee-box. And, when he was not slicing, he was pulling. I have heard that he was known, when driving at the sixth, to get bunkered in his own caddie, who had taken up his position directly behind him. As for the deep sand-trap in front of the seventh green, he spent so much of his time in it that there was some informal talk among the

members of the committee of charging him a small weekly rent.

A man of comfortable independent means, he lived during these days on next to nothing. Golf-balls cost him a certain amount, but the bulk of his income he spent in efforts to discover his wife's whereabouts. He advertised in all the papers. He employed private detectives. He even, much as it revolted his finer instincts, took to travelling about the country, watching croquet matches. But she was never among the players. I am not sure that he did not find a melancholy comfort in this, for it seemed to show that, wherever his wife might be and whatever she might be doing, she had not gone right under.

Summer passed. Autumn came and went. Winter arrived. The days grew bleak and chill, and an early fall of snow, heavier than had been known at that time of the year for a long while, put an end to golf. Mortimer spent his days indoors, staring gloomily through the window at the white mantle that covered the earth.

It was Christmas Eve.

The young man shifted uneasily on his seat. His face was long and sombre.

"All this is very depressing," he said.

"These soul tragedies," agreed the Oldest Member, "are never very cheery."

"Look here," said the young man, firmly, "tell me one thing frankly, as man to man. Did Mortimer find her dead in the snow, covered except for her face, on which still lingered that faint, sweet smile which he remembered so well? Because, if he did, I'm going home."

"No, no," protested the Oldest Member. "Nothing of that kind."

"You're sure? You aren't going to spring it on me suddenly?"

"No, no!"

The young man breathed a relieved sigh.

"It was your saying that about the white mantle covering the earth that made me suspicious."

The Sage resumed.

IT was Christmas Eve. All day the snow had been falling, and now it lay thick and deep over the countryside. Mortimer Sturgis, his frugal dinner concluded—what with losing his wife and not being able to get any golf, he had little appetite these days—was sitting in his drawing-room, moodily polishing the blade of his jigger. Soon wearying of this once congenial task, he laid down the club and went to the front door, to see if there was any chance of a thaw. But no. It was freezing. The snow, as he tested it with his shoe, crackled crisply. The sky above was black and full of cold stars. It seemed to Mortimer that the sooner he packed up and went to the south of France, the better. He was just about to close the door, when suddenly he thought he heard his own name called.

"Mortimer!"

Had he been mistaken? The voice had sounded faint and far away.

"Mortimer!"

He thrilled from head to foot. This time there could be no mistake. It was the voice he knew so well, his wife's voice, and it had come from somewhere down near the garden-gate. It is difficult to judge distance where sounds are concerned, but Mortimer estimated that the voice had spoken about a short mashie-niblick and an easy putt from where he stood.

The next moment he was racing down the snow-covered path. And then his heart stood still. What was that dark something on the ground just inside the gate? He leaped towards it. He passed his hands over it. It was a human body. Quivering, he struck a match. It went out. He struck another. That went out, too. He struck a third, and it burnt with a steady flame; and, stooping, he saw that it was his wife who lay there, cold and stiff. Her eyes were closed, and on her face still lingered that faint, sweet smile he remembered so well.

The young man rose with a set face. He reached for his golf-bag.

"I call that a dirty trick," he said, "after you promised——" The Sage waved him back to his seat.

"Have no fear! She had only fainted."

"You said she was cold."

"Wouldn't you be cold if you were lying in the snow?"

"And stiff."

"Mrs. Sturgis was stiff because the train-service was bad, it being the holiday-season, and she had had to walk all the way from the Junction, a distance of eight miles. Sit down and allow me to proceed."

Tenderly, reverently Mortimer Sturgis picked her up and began to bear her into the house. Half-way there, his foot slipped on a piece of ice and he fell heavily, barking his shin and shooting his lovely burden out on to the snow.

The fall brought her to. She opened her eyes.

"Mortimer, darling!" she said.

Mortimer had just been going to say something else, but he checked himself.

"Are you alive?" he asked.

"Yes," she replied.

"Thank God!" said Mortimer, scooping some of the snow out of the back of his collar.

Together they went into the house, and

"The fall brought her to. She opened her eyes. 'Mortimer, darling!' she said."

into the drawing-room. Wife gazed at husband, husband at wife. There was a silence.

"Rotten weather!" said Mortimer.

"Yes, isn't it!"

The spell was broken. They fell into each

other's arms. And presently they were sitting side by side on the sofa, holding hands, just as if that awful parting had been but a dream.

It was Mortimer who made the first reference to it.

"I say, you know," he said, "you oughtn't to have nipped away like that!"

"I thought you hated me!"

"Hated *you!* I love you better than life itself! I would sooner have smashed my pet driver than have had you leave me!"

She thrilled at the words.

"Darling!"

Mortimer fondled her hand.

"I was just coming back to tell you that I loved you still. I was going to suggest that you took lessons from some good professional. And I found you gone!"

"I wasn't worthy of you, Mortimer!"

"My angel!" He pressed his lips to her hair, and spoke solemnly. "All this has taught me a lesson, dearest. I knew all along, and I know it more than ever now, that it is you—you that I want. Just you! I don't care if you don't play golf. I don't care——" He hesitated, then went on manfully. "I don't care even if you play croquet, so long as you are with me!"

For a moment her face showed a rapture that made it almost angelic. She uttered a low moan of ecstasy. She kissed him. Then she rose.

"Mortimer, look!"

"What at?"

"Me. Just look!"

The jigger which he had been polishing lay on a chair close by. She took it up. From the bowl of golf-balls on the mantelpiece she selected a brand new one. She placed it on the carpet. She addressed it. Then, with a merry cry of 'Fore!' she drove it hard and straight through the glass of the china-cupboard.

"Good God!" cried Mortimer, astounded. It had been a bird of a shot.

She turned to him, her whole face alight with that beautiful smile.

"When I left you, Mortie," she said, "I had but one aim in life, somehow to make myself worthy of you. I saw your advertisements in the papers, and I longed to answer them, but I was not ready. All this long, weary while I have been in the village of Auchtermuchtie, in Scotland, studying under Tammas McMickle."

"Not the Tammas McMickle who finished fourth in the Open Championship of 1911, and had the best ball in the foursome in 1912 with Jock McHaggis, Andy McHeather, and Sandy McHoots!"

"Yes, Mortimer, the very same. Oh, it was difficult at first. I missed my mallet, and longed to steady the ball with my foot and use the toe of the club. Wherever there was a direction post I aimed at it automatically. But I conquered my weakness. I practised steadily. And now Mr. McMickle says my handicap would be a good twenty-four on any links." She smiled apologetically. "Of course, that doesn't sound much to you! You were a twelve when I left you, and now I suppose you are down to eight or something."

Mortimer shook his head.

"Alas, no!" he replied, gravely. "My game went right off for some reason or other, and I'm twenty-four, too."

"For some reason or other!" She uttered a cry. "Oh, I know what the reason was! How can I ever forgive myself! I have ruined your game!"

The brightness came back to Mortimer's eyes. He embraced her fondly.

"Do not reproach yourself, dearest," he murmured. "It is the best thing that could have happened. From now on, we start level, two hearts that beat as one, two drivers that drive as one. I could not wish it otherwise. By George! It's just like that thing of Tennyson's."

He recited the lines softly:—

> My bride,
> My wife, my life. Oh, we will walk the links
> Yoked in all exercise of noble end,
> And so thro' those dark bunkers off the course
> That no man knows. Indeed, I love thee: come,
> Yield thyself up: our handicaps are one:
> Accomplish thou my manhood and thyself;
> Lay thy sweet hands in mine and trust to me.

She laid her hands in his.

"And now, Mortie, darling," she said, "I want to tell you all about how I did the long twelfth at Auchtermuchtie in one under bogey."

An Idyll of the Downs

by STELLA CALLAGHAN

ILLUSTRATED BY NORAH SCHLEGEL

I.

IT was a Saturday evening.

Primitive Man sat at the mouth of his tent in a little dip of the downs and considered. He considered first of all how immensely wise he was to be where he was—and this gave him tremendous satisfaction, as it always does when one is doing the thing one wished to do at the time when one wished to do it. He considered the good week's work he had done—without any result—and this gave him satisfaction also, since it promised possible results the next week—achievement always being a little dull in the aftermath, leaving one temporarily without a to-morrow. He considered too—and this was a little tedious, except for a pleasantly empty sensation inside him—that presently—presently—he must bestir himself and cook his supper before the log fire died down.

Also, and this perhaps sub-consciously, he considered the glory of the wide open space of the rolling downs before him, clothed in the mystery of gathering dusk.

These things went through his mind in a gentle, inconsecutive way as he sat at the mouth of his tent on an upturned packing case, and pulled at his pipe. A pipe, of course. A cigarette may soothe the feverish moments of emotion or business, he reflected, a cigar may be appropriate at the finish of a well-served dinner in pleasant company; but for the end of a hard day's manual toil in the open air there is nothing for Primitive Man but a pipe, and a well-coloured, well-tried friend it must be at that.

Primitive Man, who had been all day, and for many days previously, superintending the cutting through of an ancient barrow on the downs a little above him, in the hopes of finding the bones and belongings of some king of a forgotten race, felt a sensation of immense and lethargic peace steal over him, hampered only by that one drawback to primitive life—hunger.

He *must* cook his supper.

There was a possible thunderstorm rolling up the hot evening sky, and if it broke his fire would be put out, and he would have to eat cold food, which he frankly detested.

So primitive was he that no oil stove had been included in his camp equipment, which, indeed, consisted mainly of a bed, a chair, and a table—and a box of books. It had come to a choice between the books and an oil stove—and the books had it. Also, deep in his heart was a primitive—or possibly merely boyish—love of the smell of a wood fire, and the sight of the blue smoke curling up into the still air.

A sort of dialogue went on inside him :—

"If you had been a real primitive man you would have had a woman who would have cooked supper for you."

"Yes, but what a bother she would have been the rest of the day."

"She might have been rather pleasant to talk to of an evening. It is lonely sometimes."

"It's not—I don't like women—they're a nuisance and spoil the scheme of things entirely."

"She would have kept your disgracefully untidy camp nice and made it comfortable for you."

"She wouldn't—she'd have tidied everything away where I couldn't find it, and she'd always be wanting to go down into the village for something."

"She would have washed your pants and your shorts and your sweater for you."

"I don't like them washed; it's much easier

to throw them away when you've done with them. Besides, women aren't like that nowadays—it was all right for the Johnny up in the barrow, I dare say."

"There are women who——"

"I expect there are, but I don't know them, and I don't want them, anyway."

"She would have cooked your supper for you and now you must do it yourself."

"I don't care—I'm just going to—and it's a jolly good thing there aren't any women here. I came here to get away from them."

Primitive Man knocked out his pipe against the tent peg and roused himself.

"Supper or no supper, the whole beauty of this show is the fact that there are no women within miles—unless there's one up in the barrow. At least I can do what I please."

And at that moment he nearly jumped out of his seat because a little voice, melodious as a stream, but somewhat tremulous, appeared to address him from somewhere behind the tent.

"Oh, please, is there anyone there?"

Following the voice, before he had time to collect his shattered wits, a little slim, white figure came into view round the corner of the tent.

So completely surprised was he that for a moment he simply looked at it, vaguely and disapprovingly.

It was certainly somewhat peculiar. Out of the very down itself, it seemed, had arisen this little white figure—slim and in the dusk rather nebulous—but apparently that of a girl. Behind her floated something vague and diaphanous.

"Oh—I'm very sorry to disturb you," went on the soft voice, distinctly more tremulous, "but—it's rather absurd, but I'm—I'm lost."

The excavator, determined bravely not to believe what he saw, did not move.

"I'm sorry, too," he said, severely, "but I'm afraid I can't find you just now. If you belong to the barrow you'd better go back there and we'll come and dig you up on Monday."

The little figure showed now that she had eyes—very large and rather beautiful eyes set in a perfect oval face. She opened them very wide and stared at Primitive Man, uncomprehendingly.

"Oh—don't," she said. "Please help me—I really am lost and I'm so dreadfully tired. My feet don't seem a part of me any longer."

He sat up slowly.

"*Are* you real?" he said, wonderingly.

A ghost of a laugh rippled out into the still air.

"Of course I am," she said, wearily. "Horribly real, and I'm afraid I'm going to be a great nuisance to you, because I'm so tired and hungry I want to cry."

There being something entirely human about that statement, and about those rather wonderful eyes, Primitive Man forgot his primitiveness and remembered his manners.

He dived into the back of the tent and produced a hammock chair.

"Please sit down and rest," he said, promptly. "Dinner will be served directly."

"Oh-h!" The ghost of a laugh, a very tired little ghost, rippled out again. "Thank you."

And the small white figure subsided gratefully into the chair and closed her eyes.

PRIMITIVE MAN, without more ado, without so much as glancing at her again, kicked his log fire into life and got busy with a frying-pan and lard. He was above all things a man of prompt action.

Soon a savoury and delicious smell rose up on the heavy, still air. It reached the vague consciousness of the girl in the chair, appetizing, insinuating.

She opened her eyes.

Primitive Man, kneeling by his log fire, with the flickering flames throwing his strong and grimly-determined face into sharp relief against the gathering dusk, made a picture not unattractive—a square figure, broadly made, and giving an impression of strength of arm and shoulder that was somehow comforting to contemplate in the heavy dusk on a remote down.

The comfort of it came vaguely into the mind of the girl. More sharply, and still more comforting, came the savoury smell from the frying-pan.

She sat up a little more and leaned forward, watching him.

"What are you doing?" she called out, softly. Her voice seemed just to touch the still air and break away into little fragments over the downs.

"Frying onions—and things——" he returned, without so much as looking up.

"It does smell good," she murmured, and subsided again into the chair with closed eyes.

"Ready directly," he said, with practical cheerfulness, giving a last vigorous shake to the frying-pan. In a few minutes he had placed the table before her, with its two plates of frizzling, hot food, cut some substantial hunks of good farmhouse bread, and drawn two mugs of cider from a cask. Then he drew up his packing-case as a seat for himself.

"If you *are* real," he said, "you will get through that plateful easily—if not, of course, I shall know where I am."

"I wish *I* did," she murmured, obediently, even eagerly, sitting up and daintily, if

"'Oh I'm very sorry to disturb you,' went on the soft voice, distinctly more tremulous, 'but—it's rather absurd, but I'm—I'm lost.'"

hungrily, falling-to on the dinner. "You see, I started out——"

"No explanations, please, until you're through with it—*and* the cider—*thank* you——"

"Of course," he said, presently, "if you had just let me know you were going to be lost to-day, I could have done better. There are several things I can do. I can grill a bit of steak or a chop on the embers, for instance—extremely well, I consider—but naturally, if you will just drop in from the skies without a word of warning—well, you must take the consequences of the mixed fry. It's a Saturday, too, always a bad day, except for the bread—it's new, you notice. The baker's cart throws it out on to the down about a mile away and I pick it up, if I remember it's a Saturday, before the sheep do. It's quite a sprint sometimes. There was an old ram who—well—I was just in time this morning, which was lucky for you."

He was talking in a cheerful and matter-of-fact voice between mouthfuls, not allowing her a word in edgeways, until she had finished her plate.

"There's nothing to follow," he said, as she finished it, and put down her fork with the air of a guileless and obedient child who has done what it was told, "except coffee—I make very good coffee—and cake."

He had been moving about the camp, putting the coffee-pot on the logs and hunting about in the "larder" for the remains of what had once been a large round farmhouse cake. As he held it out to her to break off her piece a trill of delicious laughter, the real thing this time, and not the mere ghost of it, bubbled out.

He looked at her critically, seeming somehow to be seeing her for the first time, which in a way he was, so absorbed had he been in the preparation of dinner. Then, all at once, he absurdly wished he had not looked at her so directly. His eyes seemed to get tangled up and be extraordinarily difficult to move away.

He pulled himself together, and went, rather abruptly, to look after the coffee, simmering on the log fire.

When he returned he had recovered.

"NOW," he said, pouring into two impossible and cracked cups the most delicious coffee she had ever tasted, "perhaps you will kindly explain yourself a little—just a little—nothing to tire yourself more—but just indicate how—if you are really lost—how I am to find you——"

She sipped her coffee appreciatively.

"Yes," she answered, "this is all rather wonderful, isn't it—*you* are rather wonderful, really——"

He bowed acknowledgment gravely.

"No one before has ever done my cooking justice," he said, "and yet I *knew* it was somehow good. But to continue—or rather to begin——"

"Now that I'm rested and fed—and—and—and—well, it's almost impossible to recall how tired, and *how* hungry and how—how horribly frightened I was——"

It struck him gratefully that some sorts of women would have continued to be frightened—night was fast shutting down over the great downs, and she was at least five miles from anywhere. But she seemed to have settled very naturally and comfortably in her chair with her feet curled up elfin-like beneath her.

"You see, I'm staying at Greatlands——"

He whistled. Greatlands was the name of the place where lived Sir Charles Norton—owner of the downs—for whom he was carrying out the excavations. He knew Sir Charles slightly—a grim old curmudgeon. "And after tea I was so desperately bored."

"You would be—I've been there and I know——"

"Of course, Aunt Milly—that's Lady Norton—she's my aunt—is a darling, but she's so vague and so wrapped up in her silly little Pekes—and everyone else was so dull—that I just wandered off for a walk on the downs—and I walked on and on—it's so fascinating trying always to get to the next hill, one is sure one will see all over the place from there—but one doesn't, and then I thought I knew the way back, but I didn't—all the hillocks are exactly alike—and there was nothing and no one to be seen anywhere—and then that thunder-cloud looked like coming up—and I got most horribly frightened—I'm not a bit afraid of saying so." A little fleeting smile suddenly came into her eyes, as though she remembered other things of which she was not frightened. "And then, when I'd walked about for miles, I saw the top of your tent, and what looked like a building or a quarry or something."

"My barrow—bless it."

"Your *what?*"

"My barrow—where the king lives in whose service I am temporarily employed; but go on."

"And even then it seemed to take hours to get here—it was really rather horrible."

He handed her a cigarette and found himself lighting one himself—to his surprise. This must be the emotional moment when only the cigarette meets the case.

"And now?" he said, presently. "You were tired, and I've given you my only chair, you were hungry, and I've cooked you a rather good dinner—what is your next command?"

He looked at her again rather keenly, though now the dusk had gathered deeply

and there was not much more of her to be seen than a crumpled-up little white figure in a chair. Her eyes, however, seemed to stand out against the darkness. It was at those he looked.

"Oh," she said, tiredly, "take me back to Greatlands, please—I suppose."

He was silent a moment, making a rough calculation.

"Over the moors, up hill and down dale, rough with the smooth, it's about five miles—by the road, which one strikes a mile from here, it's a good eight——"

She gasped.

"I would love to stay here," she said, wistfully, "and sleep just where I am, but I *suppose* it can't be done——"

She spoke with the delicious simplicity of a child, a tired but still mischievous child.

"It *could* be done," said Primitive Man promptly, and then pulled himself together. "But there's your aunt and the Pekes—they are probably distracted already—to say nothing of Sir Charles—who has undoubtedly chucked an apoplectic fit."

"Uncle Charles went away this morning," she murmured, irrelevantly, as it were. "Oh, I don't wan't to walk five miles over the downs *or* eight miles by the road," she added, sleepily.

There was a long silence,

"Then I must carry you," said Primitive Man, quietly.

"*Must* you?" she said, drowsily, not even opening her eyes. "How very kind of you."

"Yes, I must," he answered, with quite unnecessary fierceness. "Look here, I'm going behind the tent to change into some decent clothes—I have a suit somewhere, and I can't face Aunt Milly or her Pekes in these. When I come back you must wake up and come along."

"All right," said a very, very tired voice.

He stumped about the camp, finding his respectable tweeds, boots, socks and all, grumbling hard.

"*What did I tell you?—women are a thorough nuisance—just as I thought I was a thousand miles away.*"

"*You know you're not angry because she is here, but because she can't stay here.*"

"*Yes, but it's all the same—they're a nuisance.*"

"*Not this one—you know she's the sweetest thing you've ever seen in your life.*"

"*That only makes it worse.*"

"*You know you're looking forward to carrying her over the downs by moonlight—it's an adventure after your own heart.*"

"*It's not—I want to go to bed and sleep and not go traipsing five miles to face that old curmudgeon and Aunt Milly.*"

"*You don't mind—all you're really cross about is that she can't stay here.*"

"*I don't care if it is that—all women are a nuisance.*"

"*Not this one.*"

And then, still struggling into his coat, he returned from behind the tent to the chair where he had left her.

She was gone.

There was no mistaking it. The chair was empty.

In the first ridiculous shock, his thought was:—

"I *knew* it. She wasn't real—in spite of the fried onions."

Then, distractedly, he searched the surrounding downs with his eyes. Even in the darkness he would have seen her little white form had it been there.

He called softly, feeling a fool that he didn't even know her name. He called as one would call a stray dog.

"Here—here—I say—where are you? Don't hide, there's a good girl."

There was no reply.

And then, suddenly turning, something white caught his eye.

He ran to the tent.

There, curled up on his camp-bed, lay the little white figure, fast and sound asleep, breathing as evenly and lightly as a child.

"Good Lord," said Primitive Man, and sat down, defeated, on his packing-case.

II.

FIVE minutes later he was still sitting there, contemplating the little sleeping figure curled up so naturally on his bed.

"Of all the confounded cheek," he murmured, but his mouth had a very tender little smile hovering round it.

"I simply can't wake her up—haven't the heart to—equally I can't lug a girl of that age sound asleep for five miles over the downs," he concluded.

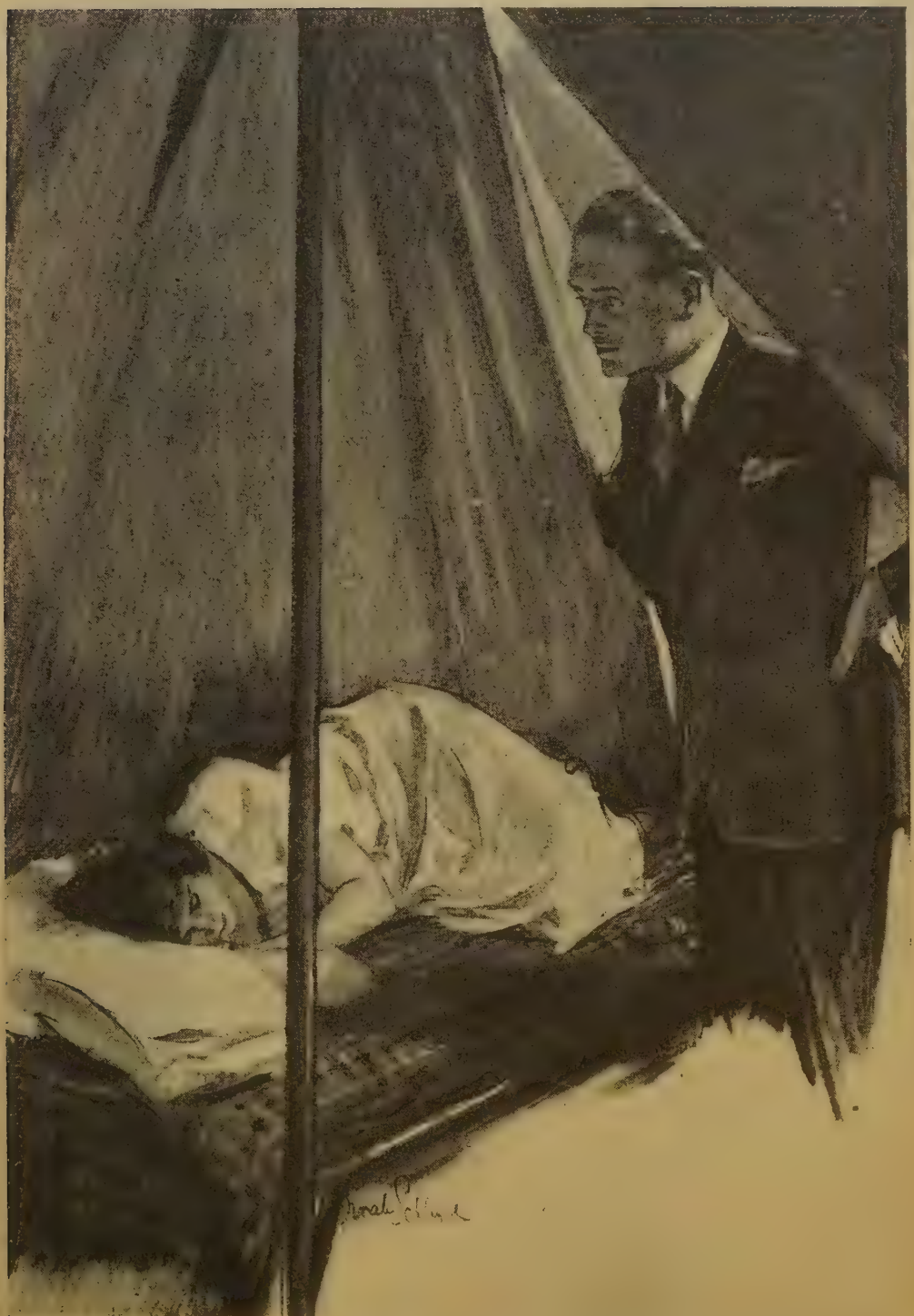
He looked up at the sky. The thunderstorm had rolled off without breaking—a half moon shone out clearly now, brightening the sky and down alike with a pale, dim light.

It was immensely quiet and lonely.

No one, he knew, would pass over the downs the whole night through. The barrows were a good mile or more away from even the by-road.

"If only I had a dog, now——"

And then suddenly he remembered. There was a dog, if by chance George, the very ancient old shepherd, was up in his little hut above him on the downs. Sometimes, in the lambing season, or if there was a sick sheep, old George did sleep there, and with him would be Bobs, the clumsy and adorable old bob-tailed sheep-dog. Bobs was a friend of Primitive Man—who, by the way, it seems under the force of circumstances and the advent of woman had shed much of his



"There, curled up on his camp-bed, lay the little white figure, fast and sound asleep, breathing as evenly and lightly as a child."

primitiveness and become merely Hugh Ellerton, professor of archæology.

Anyway, Bobs was the solution. He had guarded the tent on other occasions, when the owner had gone away.

He leant a moment over the sleeping girl, ascertained that her sleep was the real profound slumber of exhaustion—gently assisted by the cider—and then started off at an immense pace over his well-known downs, up to where the little hut on wheels usually stood.

Half an hour later, he returned with a ridiculous, solemn, and self-important bob-tail at his heels, having left the bewildered old shepherd grousing back into his disturbed sleep.

Warily he introduced the old dog to the sleeping girl. Bobs sniffed comprehendingly round.

"Lie down, Bobs—on guard."

Obediently the old dog lay at the mouth of the tent.

"H'm," thought Hugh Ellerton, "she'll be safe enough."

Then he looked agitatedly round and found his spare rug—very gently and with absurd precautions he covered the soundly sleeping girl, and tucked it tenderly round her feet.

For a quite unnecessarily long time, seeing the hurry he should have been in, he stood looking down on her.

At last he turned and, with another word to the dog and a pat on its shaggy head, he started off at a great swinging pace over the downs.

III.

IT was half-past ten before Primitive Man, feeling anything but primitive, and by this time distinctly nervous, stood before the imposing portico of Greatlands and rang the bell.

Just as he did ring the bell, he remembered suddenly and hotly that he had no idea of what he meant to say. That always puts a man, even one who prides himself on his primitiveness, at a disadvantage, but his thoughts had somehow been exclusively and absurdly of the little white figure curled up in the tent. His irritation was increased when the sound of his bell awoke, apparently, ten thousand Pekingese, who all began yapping somewhere inside the house.

If Hugh Ellerton had expected to see a household distracted by the disappearance of a valuable young niece, with search parties sent in every direction, he was mistaken. It was a sleepy and dull house approaching the end of an interminably dull day. There was no excitement, no anxiety apparent in the portly form of the butler, as he projected himself with dignity towards the drawing-room door.

Hugh refused to come farther than the great, gloomy hall.

Lady Norton, a small, vague, volcanic woman, attended by some half-a-dozen Pekes and carrying two more under her arm, burst hospitably out of the drawing-room to greet him.

"Oh, Mr. Ellerton, how nice of you to come, how very nice—down, Pompey, darling; come here, Ching, beloved; don't bite the nice man—do excuse my precious Pekes, they're so funny with strangers!"

They were being quite funny with Hugh Ellerton's ankles, but he restrained a primitive desire to kick them one by one to the other end of the hall.

"No, thanks, I won't come in—Lady Norton. I have come about your niece."

Lady Norton looked vaguely at him in the intervals of extricating two Pekes who had a sudden desire to quarrel apparently over who should have the first bite.

"My niece—Ann—why, wherever *is* Ann? Good gracious, I thought someone was missing—it made us short at Bridge, besides Charles being away—I never thought of Ann. Down, Ching, precious boy; did he want a smacking then? But, what about Ann—where on earth is she?"

Hugh Ellerton felt a desire now to kick Lady Norton, together with the Pekes, to the other end of the hall. But he realized that somehow he had a case to make and must keep his temper.

"I came over—five miles over the moor—to allay what I thought would be your natural anxiety——" he began with dignity; but it is difficult to be dignified when you are the centre of a maelstrom of yaps and Pekes with a small volcano rushing about trying to keep order.

"But *where* is Ann—on the downs, did you say—why doesn't she come home—good gracious, you don't say she's had an accident?"

"In a manner of speaking she has," he said, desperately, kicking out surreptitiously with his heel at an odious little Peke that was nibbling at it. "She has accidentally fallen asleep."

Lady Norton gave a little scream. This had the effect of exciting the Pekes to a further fury of yapping, and pandemonium reigned, while Lady Norton dashed about adjuring one and the other with little smacks.

Through the open drawing-room door he could see a placid Bridge four continuing, unmoved, through the uproar, a placid game, and two or three more somnolent guests engaged in knitting.

"Asleep? What do you mean—not—not——"

It was a quarter of an hour before Hugh Ellerton shook off the Pekes and the dust of

Greatlands from his boots, and strode away back over the moors. In that time he had somehow left Lady Norton convinced that her niece was perfectly comfortable and spending the night with a bob-tailed sheep-dog and the ghost of a king who had slept under a barrow for some four thousand years.

The one point about which Lady Norton appeared perfectly clear was that it was a merciful providence that Sir Charles was away for some time. On that single point, Hugh Ellerton agreed with her profoundly.

IV.

SO Primitive Man, long past midnight, came again to the little camp on the downs.

He strode quickly down into the dip, with mixed feelings, of which the uppermost was one of vague apprehension that he would find his strange, untoward guest had awakened and fled. Mixed therewith was extreme irritation at the bother he had put himself to in tramping to Greatlands when no one had missed her, a general grousing at all women for their proved irresponsibility, and a great desire to stretch himself somewhere—obviously his own camp bed was impossible, being, unless his fears were confirmed, already occupied—and sleep.

He approached with tip-toe caution.

A low, friendly growl greeted him. Bobs at least was still on duty.

Was she there?

For an ungallant moment he found himself half hoping she would not be—he was so exceedingly tired with his ten-mile tramp.

She was. She did not look as if she had even moved.

"The cheek of it!" he murmured, again. Then, with the absurd unreason of a man, he came to the conclusion that she must be dead—so still was that little form curled up under the blanket. His heart seemed suddenly to miss a beat.

He tip-toed nearer, stepping across Bobs, and bent agitatedly over her.

Her soft, regular breathing reassured him.

"Sound as a bell," he murmured. "The absurd assurance of her!"

Primitive Man felt himself outraged by the calm, confident way a mere whimsical child had taken possession of his camp, turning him out of his bed and his belongings as if she owned him and them and the whole world besides.

"The cheek of it!" But his mouth was very tender this time, as he said it.

She was so very sweet—lying there curled up under the blanket, only the dark, bobbed hair—her white cap and veil having been discarded after supper—visible, framing the little oval face.

Rather abruptly, Primitive Man seized the ground sheet from the floor of the tent, grabbed at a spare blanket, and betook himself to the barrow.

There, in an excavated dip, just above the dust of the king four thousand years dead, he stretched himself out and slept the sleep of the exceedingly just.

V.

DAWN had risen over the downs before Ann woke from the profound sleep of exhaustion of a tired child. She woke, gazed about her a moment in complete bewilderment, and then, as recollection came, I regret to say that instead of being properly penitent, or frightened or even slightly ashamed of herself, she began to laugh.

"What a perfectly ridiculous situation," was all she could think—"and where, oh where, is the poor man I've turned out of his tent?" And at that, she gurgled again.

All she could recollect was that, being tired beyond belief, she had just longed to stretch herself out for five minutes before starting back over the down—and the man had gone to change into respectable clothes, and the little camp-bed had looked irresistible—Heavens, how angry everyone would be—and where had the poor man gone and slept? At that moment she sat up and found herself suddenly looking into the impassive but intelligent eyes of a large and absurd bob-tail sheep-dog, who was sitting on his haunches at the foot of the bed and looking at her.

This time bewilderment had her completely.

There hadn't been a dog last night—she was sure of that. There had been a man—a rather nice, big, strong, primitive man, who had cooked fried onions over a log fire and talked nonsense.

And now he had turned into a bob-tail——

Sleep had her again and she struggled with the problem a moment before, lying back on the pillow, she was off sound again.

Bobs, seeing that she did not seem to want to move, settled himself again, with his head between his paws, and slept also.

It was seven o'clock before she woke again. This time she took herself in hand. She was hungry. Somewhere about, too, would be the man, if he were not identical with the dog (also awake and sniffing at her), and he also would be hungry.

"This is an absurd adventure," she reflected, "and with probably awful consequences from Aunt Milly; but here I am—now, where's a stream? There was a stream somewhere where the man got water for the coffee——"

Quite undismayed and with the amusement of the adventure tingling through her, she

cautiously rose and stretched her rather achy feet, still in her neat brogue shoes, over the edge of the bed.

Dog seemed friendly—more friendly perhaps that the man had been. He at least allowed her to do what she liked.

Very cautiously she prospected outside the tent; there was no sign of Primitive Man. All was quiet and still and shining in the early morning sun.

She looked round with satisfaction.

"Apparently *my* camp," she murmured, and then a bubbling sound led her to the stream, which fell into a tiny pool just below the dip where the tent was pitched.

It was the work of a moment to slip off her crumpled skirt and jumper and plunge hands and face into the ice-cold water.

"Guh—delicious!"

Her hair, being bobbed and curly, gave her no trouble.

In a few minutes she was as fresh and neat and sweet as a flower.

"Wish I could see myself," she reflected. "Primitive Man must have a glass to shave by—— Ah, he'll want hot water."

Quite undismayed, Ann filled the kettle and with a skill remembered from certain experiences in less happy moments in France, got the wood fire alight and crackling.

VI.

AT eight o'clock, Primitive Man, rolled up in his blanket in the barrow, awoke suddenly, with a sense of something funny having happened the night before. At that moment, a delicious smell of coffee—that unmistakable, permeating smell of early morning which means breakfast is nearly ready—assailed him.

Recollection came with a rush.

He tumbled out of his blanket and peered over the cutting of the barrow.

Below him lay the little camp, and about it moved, unconcernedly and quite at home, the little slim white figure of a girl that had been vaguely haunting his dreams. A little snatch of suppressed song came up to him on the morning air.

He looked hard. Yes, the fire was alight, was doing its duty to the leeward of the logs. By the tent was the little table set ready for breakfast—for two.

His heart gave a sort of whoop.

"*What did I tell you—isn't a woman rather handy sometimes? She has cooked your breakfast for you.*"

"*But that woman is one in a thousand—in a million—in fact, she's the only kind that could or would have done it.*"

"Ann sped away up the
she turned, hesitated,

"*They all are.*"

"*No, that's the only woman in the world—look at the way she . . . look at her.*"

"*Yes, and look at your chin—you simply* MUST *shave, and your hair's all rumpled.*"

And, at that moment, the girl, the only one it seemed to him that ever was or ever had been, caught sight of him and waved a gay little hand.

"Oh, that's where you are—I thought you had turned into the dog."

And a sudden bubble of laughter—the

same that had first made him look at her the night before, came up on the morning air, mingling with the smell of the coffee and the thousand scents of the down life.

Suddenly it did not seem to matter that he was not shaved, that his hair was rumpled, that his good tweed suit was not improved by the night spent in the barrow. She would understand—she would ignore it—by

green ride. At the bend and waved—once."

knowing that he knew also that she was, she must be, the one woman in a million.

He strolled down the slope with a composure as perfect as her own.

"I trust you had a good night? Aunt Milly, I believe, sent you her love. I'm not quite sure, but I believe so."

"Heavens—you've seen Aunt Milly?" Ann looked up, with serious, troubled eyes for a moment—then, with seeming irrelevance, she waved her hand nonchalantly towards the tent. "You'll find your hot water in there, and breakfast will be ready in five minutes."

"Oh, you wonderful woman!" he said, helplessly.

In ten minutes' time they were seated together at an excellent breakfast of bacon and eggs—even her cooking was competent—with all the charming intimacy and silence of old friends. Bobs came in for the bits, seated between them in that ridiculous attitude only known to bob-tails.

Presently, as they washed up the crockery and tidied the camp, he told her of his night's tramp over the downs, and of his reception by the Pekes and Aunt Milly.

"I believe," he said, thoughtfully, "if you just step back and join in a game of croquet or whatever they are doing, no one in that absurd and vague household will realize you've ever been away."

She looked wistful. "Must I?"

Primitive Man asserted himself—on the side of civilization.

"You must," he said, tersely.

"Very well," she sighed. "But people and things and conventions and all that *are* a nuisance, aren't they?"

"That's why I'm here," he agreed. "But still, they exist."

"They do—that just describes them. And *we*—people like us—*live*."

He loved the plural.

Soon they were walking slowly over the downs together towards Greatlands. There was a long silence, which he broke abruptly.

"How long are you staying here?" he said, as though he had suddenly made up his mind.

"The whole summer—off and on—worse luck. I've no nearer people, you see—and Aunt Milly, when she remembers it, has sort of adopted me."

"Every day," said Primitive Man, solemnly, "I shall interrupt my work, dislocate my entire life, and put myself to the greatest inconvenience as regards meals, for a fortnight, in order to come over the downs to that house full of detestable Pekes to see you."

She bubbled over with laughter.

"Only for a fortnight?" she asked, coolly.

"I back myself to do it in that time," he said, gravely. "Besides, I shall have dug up the king's bones by then."

"To do what?" said Ann, ignoring the king's bones and, looking up at him, suddenly looked away. "Oh-h——"

They had reached a little private gate into the Greatlands wood where it meets the downs. He opened it for her and shut her in on the further side.

She held out her hand to him over the gate.

"Good-bye," she said.

"You are—a very, very wonderful woman," said he, taking the hand.

"It was you—who were rather wonderful last night," she just said.

"Then we are both very wonderful people," he agreed, still holding the hand.

"And it's been rather a wonderful adventure," she breathed.

"It's going to be more wonderful still," he said, gently.

Then, as on that she withdrew her hand from his grasp and would not look at him, he added, softly: "*If* you also think it *may* be going to be more wonderful still—er—you might just wave your hand, say twice, when you get to the bend."

A distant yap-yapping of a Pekingese came through the woods.

Ann sped away up the green ride. At the bend she turned, hesitated, and waved—once.

Stolidly, Primitive Man stood there without response, bare-headed, on the edge of his downs.

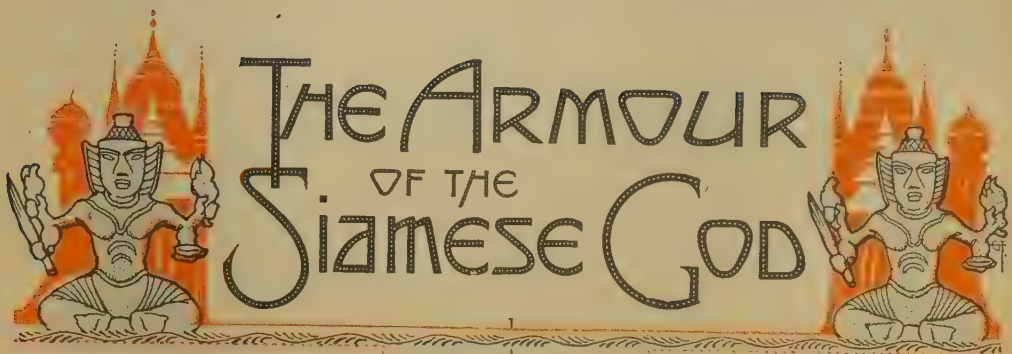
Then, suddenly, as she stood looking at him, she gave a hurried, fleeting little second wave, and had slipped away into the trees.

With a whoop of joy, Primitive Man turned, and went striding back over the downs to his camp by the barrow.

KEY TO "THE TALE OF TWENTY ERRORS"

On page 573

(1) *Page* 573, *Column* 1, *Line* 4: Studio windows face north—not west. (2) *P* 573, *C* 1, *L* 22: If he paced *three* times the length of the studio he would finish at the opposite end to the mantelpiece, where the letter was. (3) *P* 573, *C* 2, *L* 2: A man can see himself reflected full length in a mirror half his height at any distance, if the mirror be correctly placed. (3a) *P* 573, *C* 2, *L* 17: This is a trap—not an error. "Confides" was the word Nelson used. But it was not in the code, and with his consent "expects" was substituted. (4) *P* 574, *C* 1, *L* 49: These notes were not in circulation at the date of the story, which is April, 1914. (5) *P* 574, *C* 2, *L* 13: The exhibition does not open till the first Monday in May. (6) *P* 574, *C* 2, *L* 17: No rainbow is ever reflected. This mistake has been actually made by painters. The rainbow seen in the sky is not seen in the reflection; the image in the water comes from a different bow, invisible except by reflection, and is of a different size. (7) *P* 574, *C* 2, *L* 25: It was already in his pocket. See above. (8) *P* 574, *C* 2, *L* 60: The dahlia, named after the Swedish botanist Dahl, was not introduced into this country till many years later. (9) *P* 574, *C* 2, *L* 63: It is impossible for two blue-eyed parents to have brown-eyed offspring. (10) *P* 575, *C* 1, *L* 3: If she was sixty-nine in 1760, she was sixteen in 1707, and Romney was not born then. (11) *P* 575, *C* 2, *L* 26: Pure sandy cats are always male. (12) *P* 576, *C* 1, *L* 2: The month was April. See above. (13) *P* 576, *C* 1, *L* 18: This is an apricot-coloured rose. The roses in the bowl were crimson. (14) *P* 576, *C* 1, *L* 48: The previous day was Saturday; there is no postal delivery in London on Sunday. (15) *P* 577, *C* 1, *L* 1: Mrs. Gimley could not have bought plovers' eggs in September. (16) *P* 577, *C* 1, *L* 21: As she was eighteen years and two months two days before this, it could not have been her birthday. (17) *P* 577, *C* 1, *L* 34: If Patricia's attraction was "a hundred per cent. less," it must have been non-existent. (18) *P* 577, *C* 1, *L* 39: It had taken him more than two days, but less than three. (19) *P* 577, *C* 1, *L* 53: The name of the wildly generous aunt was Rosemary, not Rosamond. (20) *P* 577, *C* 2, *L* 33: The letter was already addressed before Dahlia came to the studio.



The Armour of the Siamese God

by
ERNEST GOODWIN
Illustrated by
RENÉ BULL

"SO," said Kwang Si, "I will take you instead."

"No, no," said Ah Chee, despair in her breast.

"Yes, yes," insisted Kwang Si, revealing two rows of long yellow teeth in a complacent smile; "you cannot pay what you owe, so—I take you instead. We settle the debt that way. To-morrow evening I will come for you."

Dignified in his voluminous robes, in which even his gross figure managed to acquire a touch of majesty, Kwang Si moved away. Ah Chee sat in the ferry punt, fire in her face, rebellion in her heart.

Her grandfather was dead. His shrivelled old body, shrunken from long years of hard work and little food, had been duly disposed of in the burying-ground, and Ah Chee, her father and mother dead years before, was now facing the world alone. A narrow, a constricted world. She and her grandfather had worked the ferry together. The river here ran between shallow banks, and there had been a crossing at this point for time out of mind. But the town had grown away from the old ferry. People crossed more and more by the bamboo bridge a mile higher up. Life had grown harder and harder this last year. Ah Chee was a thin girl.

But if the ferry had been starvation for two it might yet support one more reasonably. Ah Chee was in rags. The rice that, to avoid the rats, was hung in the sack on a nail in the wall of the ferryman's hut of mud and bamboo thatch, was of the quality one gives to beggars. But now, perhaps, she might at least have enough to eat—somehow the rags in which she had to face the world might get themselves replaced with some more adequate covering. Only—she was very lonely. Just now and then she would go into the town to buy rice, but for the rest the ferry was her universe, the infrequent passenger an unreal thing, a passing shadow.

And now Kwang Si had come down upon her. She had seen him only once before. Some weeks ago he had crossed the ferry. She had punted him over, and had been strangely uncomfortable under the unblinking stare that went over her, inch by inch, from behind the round-glassed, horn-rimmed spectacles.

AH CHEE was eighteen. Being a working woman her feet had never been bound. The ferry life, despite its pitiful short commons, was a healthy one. She was tall. She had a backbone like steel. The Chinese type occasionally modifies in a subtle way into something strangely fascinating. When in her scanty rags she plied the punt pole with the mastery of long experience, line on line of grace revealed a beauty of figure that would most certainly have made appeal to a Western eye.

Kwang Si had travelled, in his young days, to France, to Russia. He prided himself on a broad taste. On that day when Ah Chee ferried him over the river he let himself luxuriate in his appreciation. He also, in his methodical way, made a mental note.

A week after the worn-out ferryman had closed his shrivelled eyelids for the last time, Kwang Si gave himself the trouble to visit the ferry again. Ah Chee suddenly found that this little universe of hers that had been so dull and uneventful could throb with thoughts—horrible thoughts.

Kwang Si, she knew, was the great man thereabouts. How far his rule extended she never thought. Almost to the ends of the world, she supposed. Everyone in the world, she felt sure, would hasten to do his bidding. Men died when he ordered it. Merchants paid when he ordered it. The long caravans that sought to cross the river by the city bridge had to sit down and wait

till something or other had been settled with Kwang Si.

He was brief, and he smiled all the time he talked to her. Ah Chee, by the time he had finished, wished he would hit her instead of looking her over with that horrible, yellow-toothed smile.

Kwang Si owned the ferry. That Ah Chee knew. What she did not know till he told her was that for years past her grandfather had not been able to pay the rent Kwang Si charged. Kwang Si had let it run on. Why? Possibly, when Ah Chee was but a strip of a girl of twelve or so,

"Kwang Si gave himself the trouble to visit the ferry again."

Kwang Si had swept her with a glance that looked so little and saw so much. Possibly the mental note he had made then had taken in the possibilities that lay in the next few years. At any rate, he had let the debt grow. Now he asked for payment.

And Ah Chee could not pay. She stood bewildered while Kwang Si explained that the debt of the old man undoubtedly descended upon her, that she therefore owed him thirty liang and that she must pay.

"Now, at once, here," said Kwang Si, smilingly.

"My lord—thirty liang—so much does not come to me in a year—in two years."

"What will you do, then?" asked the still-smiling Kwang Si.

Ah Chee stood bewildered and unspeaking. Then, happily surveying her, and noting with keen appreciation the changes from white to red and white again that swept over her face, Kwang Si made quite clear to her what must happen. Payment must be made, and she must pay as best she could. Kwang Si would take her to his big house. She would be his servant. She would be well treated. No more ferry, no more aching limbs on those lucky days when perhaps two score of times she might be called upon to fight her way across the wide and deep river. She would have nice clothes, she would have plenty of good food. She knew. Kwang Si made the best of life. Other girls had gone to the mandarin's palace before her. Sometimes they came back to their homes after a time. Sometimes they remained in Kwang Si's service, not, however, in such a state of exaltation as that to which they were originally allotted. Sometimes—sometimes no one knew what became of them.

She was very trembling and very frightened and very sickened. Kwang Si was gracious, suave, smiling, soft-spoken. Every moment she grew more and more desperate. By the time he left her she had made up her mind. She would not live.

She would drown herself. Why not? What was life? Very hard work, very monotonous, very lonely. Rags and bad food and the companionship of a half imbecile old man was all she had won till

now. And now Kwang Si had lifted the curtain and shown her a future that to her seemed abominable. She would drown herself—that night she would punt out into the river and jump over into the swift-moving water.

And at night she discovered for the first time that life, the strange, undefinable thing that dwelt within her, in her heart, in her brain—she did not know where—would not let her do what she planned. She could not understand it. It seemed a simple thing. In the darkness she untied the punt, poled out into the stream, laid the pole down in the punt, stood for a second peering down into the quiet greyness that slipped past—and there she stood. One spring and it was done. Just a step outwards, and Kwang Si with his horrible smile and the aching dread of what she only dimly comprehended would be things of the past. She must, she must—and still she stood motionless. The thing inside her had risen in revolt and forbade.

In despair she poled back, up the river-side, to the wretched hut. She tied the punt up and sat brooding. Presently Kwang Si began to loom darker in her mind again, her terror of him grew again in her. She got a length of young bamboo and fixed it in the wooden plug in the bottom of the punt. This time she would make it easy. She would punt out again, and in the middle of the stream she would take the end of the bamboo in her hand and give a pull—a little pull would do.

She punted out, laid the pole down, sat down on the stern platform, took the cane in her hands, shut her eyes, and pulled hard. She was sure she pulled hard. She was certain that the plug would come. Then the punt would fill and all her troubles would be over. She pulled till the cane cut her hand—but the plug would not come.

"Magic!" shuddered Ah Chee. "He knows—Kwang Si knows. He is all-powerful—the demons do as he tells them. He has cast a spell over the plug. It cannot be removed."

She gave it up, and shaking with terror she worked the drifting punt back to the ferry. How should she know that she had never once pulled the bamboo? She had gripped it—she had strained both hands upon it, but never in a pull. Life fighting for its rights plays strange tricks with muscle and brain.

So till dawn she sat in the punt, and minute by minute she grew more hopeless.

One or two passengers came to the ferry that day, and mechanically she did her work. Perhaps they had spoken to her. She did not know. All day she had waited for the coming of one man—and at dusk he came. Still smiling, more dreadful to her than ever, Kwang Si struck the bronze bell that swung by the landing-stage across the river, and shaking in every limb she had punted across and brought him over.

"You are ready, Ah Chee?" he asked her, softly. She could not speak, but she made a gesture of repulsion. He laughed silently.

"Yes, yes. But you must be better dressed. A caravan waits near the bridge. It carries silks, in many shapes. I shall be back soon. I shall bring you a dress in which you will delight my eyes."

"Let me go, my lord; O Beneficence, let me go!" pleaded Ah Chee, hot-eyed.

"Maybe—presently. Not for a time, Ah Chee."

So Kwang Si footed it off to where the caravan waited to know on what terms the great man would permit it to cross the bridge and go through the town. Not a

"She pulled till the cane cut her hand—but the plug would not come."

hundred paces from the hut he met a young man who, seeing his dress, stopped and saluted him duly. Kwang Si nodded to this young man, and smiled benignly. He was feeling very pleased with the world and with himself. The young man, loaded up with packages, and very hot and tired, standing humbly at the side of the foot-track till the great man had passed him, felt exhilarated at receiving so gracious a salutation from this exalted official.

So Kwang Si reached the caravan. And Ah Chee sat motionless by the river. And Wu Tong came stalking down to the ferry.

"Hi! Ferry—ferry—ferry! Where are you, you lazy old blackguard? Wake up, wake up, wake up!"

That was how Wu Tong broke into the musings of Ah Chee.

An excitable young man. A breezy, blithesome, happy young man. Pleased? Why, Kwang Si himself was not so pleased with himself, the world, and everyone in it, as Wu Tong was.

WU TONG was bound for the one spot in the world which he had longed to see with a great longing for the last three years, his home in Yunnan. There lived his old mother—on the little farm where one could grow such glorious crops of rice and beans if one worked hard enough—and Wu Tong was a worker. Three years before it had occurred to a Great One on the confines of the empire near the Siamese frontier that a war might easily be made a source of profit. Given a war there must be an army. An army must be fed, clothed, and paid. The handling of a campaign for a year or so ought to provide handsome pickings. So in due time a war there was. It was not necessary to inform the Government. One or two even Greater Ones at Pekin had to be told, had to be let into the scheme as a matter of fact, but this had been arranged with tact, and a nice little war had got itself going. It ramped, in the way wars have, over several hundreds of miles of country, and it caused deaths and poverty and plagues in the usual way, but it had been quite a sound piece of business for the Great One who had conceived it.

There had to be an army, of course, which was why Wu Tong had suddenly found himself swept into the matter. He had not complained. Who was he to make question? They gave him a gun. It would not fire. They gave him a bayonet. It bent like lead. But as Wu Tong was never shown how to load a gun or use a bayonet these things did not matter. He fought as best he could; he threw away his bayonet and used his gun as a club, and having a pair of shoulders most men would have envied him he did very well.

"Kwang Si nodded to the young man and smiled benignly."

Then, after three years or so, the army got restive. It found a scholar in its ranks who addressed a letter of remonstrance to the general in command, and requested that the army should be sent home. The general called his faithful guard together and ordered them to arrest the ringleaders of this audacious move and administer the Slice Death. The faithful guard, however, preferred to strangle the general with his own pigtail. The other officers got away—here and there, and then the army went home.

Before it went it made earnest efforts to find the paymaster, or, at

any rate, the pay-chest; but it failed. Paymasters all the world over have a prescience, a knowledge of events to come, far exceeding that of generals, and they never saw so much as his dust. So, before making a start for home, the army spared a day or two for looting.

Wu Tong was slow at that game. He did not like to hear women cry, nor see people generally made angry and terrified. All the same, he felt he must take something home to his old mother, so with a few others he made a short pilgrimage to a Siamese temple. He came away with a suit of armour which for a good many years had decked a wooden representation of a Siamese god. It was of bronze, life-size, magnificently wrought, and inlaid with gold. To Western eyes it would have been a thing of matchless art, and worth its weight in sovereigns. Wu Tong didn't know anything about art, but he reckoned the metal worth carrying home, even if the whole suit weighed not less than half a hundredweight.

"He saw against the sun the figure of a girl."

So Wu Tong walked home—some six hundred miles or so—with various bundles strung about him wrapped in rice straw and paper cloth. It was a long walk, and the army, having to live on the land as it worked its way back, received but a chilling welcome from the country folk. Still, Wu Tong was energetic. He walked faster than anyone else in the army, and got the benefit of what little enthusiasm might be going before the main horde came along and put a damper on it.

And that day, having carried his half-hundred or so cheerfully over some thirty miles of dusty road, he was brought by fate at eventide to Ah Chee and the ferry.

HIS exuberant hail meeting with no response, Wu Tong prepared to let fly with another, but hearing a movement behind him he turned, and saw against the sun the figure of a girl, tallish, upright, with a pale face and heavy eyes. Life amuses itself at times with its own freakish irregularity of pace. If there are blank days and weeks there are also moments conspicuously crowded. Wu Tong became aware that life could scamper when it wanted to. All sorts of thoughts began to hurry about in a turmoil inside his big-boned Mongolian skull. Strange emotions, which he felt must be absolutely unprecedented, took hold on him. As a matter of fact, it was the oldest miracle in the world getting itself performed for the billionth time.

The girl looked at him inquiringly, and when she spoke he knew at once from the tone of her voice that something was wrong.

"You want to cross the river?"

Wu Tong grinned pleasantly.

"I? What an idea! I come to the ferry—I shout for the ferryman—obviously I want to stop on this side." That was Wu Tong's sort of humour, and it usually brought an answering grin, but this girl did not smile. Evidently there *was* something wrong with her. That was why her face was so white and set.

"Where's the ferryman, Moon-face?" continued Wu Tong, politely.

"I am the ferryman—I'll ferry you over."

"You, Cherry-bloom?" That was just his native politeness. She ignored it. "This is not women's work. The river is broad—it looks deep——"

"It is deep," answered Ah Chee, without interest; "three men deep in places."

Wu Tong looked over the broad stream.

"And it's in a hurry. So am I—or, no, I don't know that I am just now." She had nice eyes, he thought. Pity she looked so sad. "Why should a girl like you do such hard work? Is your husband such a lazy blackguard?"

"I have no husband. I'll take you over,"

Certainly she was hard to get on with. Not a smile. What *was* wrong?

"No husband!" said Wu Tong, with genuine surprise in his civility; "why, what are all the men about? If I hadn't such a long way to walk I'd marry you myself." Not a smile. "What's the ferry fee?"

"The fee doesn't matter. I'll take you for nothing," said Ah Chee. "You're my last customer—though there's one more man I shall take across the ferry before I leave it."

"Are you selling your ferry?" Wu Tong had squatted down among his parcels at the top of the little flight of wooden steps that led down to where the punt lay moored among the reeds by the river-bank. He had been in a hurry when he reached the ferry, but now, somehow, he felt quite at leisure. He wanted to talk to this girl.

"Sell it? Who'll buy it?"

"Why not? A ferry's a living, isn't it? Why, four or five years ago I'd have liked to have been a ferryman myself. Sit down and talk," he went on, impatiently and persuasively. "I haven't talked to a girl like you for many a long day." As he said that he wondered when he *had* talked to a girl like this, and decided that he never had. He would cross the ferry directly, but he must get a laugh out of her before he left her—and he wanted to tell her all about himself—and his farm—and his mother—and his plans. Moment by moment he felt increasing in him a great desire to make her know all about him.

She stood there, ignoring his invitation to sit down. He went chattering eagerly on.

"I'm in a hurry to get home I've been in the war in Siam for three years, and now I'm done with fighting—for ever, I hope—and I'm going to my home in Yunnan to be a farmer again. Do you know Yunnan?"

Surely she would display a little human interest? She gave him the merest answer: "No."

"That's a fine country," rattled on Wu Tong. "Rice-fields, bean-fields, wheat-fields—ah, lovely, I tell you." He considered her a moment, then burst out, "What eyes you've got, what eyebrows!"

Impassive as ever, she neither smiled nor reproved him.

"If you want to go over, better let me take you now."

"No hurry," said Wu Tong, who a minute before had been explaining to her what a hurry he was in. "Why should I hurry? I've done well. We were swindled out of our pay, but I've got stuff in these parcels"—he stopped, rubbed an aching shoulder, and reflected pleasantly. "You're not sociable," he said suddenly, looking up at her. "Can't you pass the time of day to a man?"

"What about?" asked the strange girl.

"Well—about—you. I like you. Why are you leaving the ferry?"

He saw Ah Chee draw a long, long breath. He had talked so far ineffectively, it might have seemed, and yet something had been going on in the breast of Ah Chee. Perhaps it was the never-ceasing dance of his bright black eyes, the glint of his strong white teeth, the boyish grin as he talked, that worked on her. Suddenly she felt her reserve, the icy chill in which her feelings lay locked, beginning to melt. Despair still held her, but she could talk.

"A man is coming for me," Her bosom heaved under its rags.

"A man—what man?" asked Wu Tong, gravely. "Are you going to marry him?"

"No——" She stopped. He saw her lip quiver.

"What do you mean? Tell me, why should a man come for you—to take you away? Where?"

He sat still, but in a tenser attitude. His black eyes danced no more. They drew Ah Chee compellingly. She had not meant to talk. What was the use? No one could help her against Kwang Si. Why let anyone know of her shame? But this young man's voice was a very insistent thing.

"To his house," she answered.

"Are you to be his servant?"

"Yes—and anything else he wishes."

Wu Tong sat still for a second or two, then he got up swiftly and looked down at her from quite near. He noted that she did not drop her eyes, but threw her head back, lifting her face to his with an abrupt, defiant movement.

He spoke to her slowly and quietly: "Are you a bad girl?"

"No."

"You—you like this man?"

"I hate him!" The flash in her eyes was an illuminating thing while it lasted.

"Why do you go?"

"I have no choice."

"How can that be?" asked Wu Tong, searchingly; "has he bought you?"

"Yes." Her head drooped for the first time.

"Who from?"

"From—from myself, I suppose. Oh, don't let us talk. It does no good. Come." She went to move past him down the steps.

Wu Tong put out a hand and arm of steel

and stopped her. At the touch of it she stood still, and three great tearless sobs came from her. His eyes, his broad, good-natured face, his voice, and now this grip of his—they made up a something whose mere existence was comforting—and comfort was terrible to have to bear.

"You tell me," said Wu Tong, briefly; and Ah Chee told him.

He listened, motionless as a statue, till she concluded—"I had no money, so he says I must pay as he chooses."

He pondered awhile.

"How much do you owe?"

"He says, thirty liang. I don't know. Who can tell? It may be true."

He again pondered her case, eyes fixed on hers.

"Why don't you run away? See, if you like I'll take you with me. Don't be afraid," as she leant away from him. "I like you. You are a strong girl, you could get work somewhere. I'd look after you till we come somewhere where there is work—or a husband for you."

She made no answer.

"Why not?" insisted Wu Tong.

"It would be dishonourable and displeasing to the gods if I ran away to avoid paying a just debt."

"But you don't owe it."

"Kwang Si says I do. It must be so. My grandfather owed it, and now he is dead, so I must pay."

"Who is Kwang Si?"

"He is our mandarin, and a great man. We must all do as he tells us. His arm is long. If I ran away he would reach me. No, he does what he likes."

"I would run for it," said Wu Tong, stubbornly. Yet he felt the venturesomeness of the advice.

"No." She trembled and looked round.

"Suddenly Ah Chee felt his hands upon her."

"I dare not offend the gods. And Kwang Si would pay the priest, and the priest would make a long prayer, and the gods would turn me into a wild pig, and a hyæna would eat me."

Wu Tong shivered. It was so incontestably true. Yet he felt mutinous.

A thought came to him.

"I passed a Great One walking away from here as I came. A fat man—so high. Was that——?"

"Yes. He was here just before you came. He is going to get me some clothes to wear, and then he will take me away."

Wu Tong recalled the urbane condescension that had returned his respectful greeting. He understood the smile now.

"I'll turn Kwang Si into cold pig if you like," he said, greatly daring, and yet feeling she was worth it.

"No. You would be sliced up. You cannot help me."

He stood silent. She sat down on the steps as he had done. He looked down at her. He was thinking hard.

Suddenly Ah Chee felt his hands upon her. He had stepped down towards her, stooped, and slipping a hand under each armpit he raised her to her feet.

"Are you a good girl?" he asked. She knew what he meant.

"Yes," she answered, eyes on ground.

"Look at me, and tell me." He could be harsh. His voice was full of threat. So were his eyes as she looked up into them. They blazed down fiercely into hers. "Are you?"

"Yes."

"And is what you've told me true?"

"Yes."

"Mind, if I everfound out you have told me lies I'd kill you. Is it all true?"

"Yes."

"And you don't want to go with this Kwang Si?"

For answer Ah Chee slipped out of his hands and sat down by the steps and cried. And through her tears she told him of the night before, of her punting out to jump into the river, of the cane she had fastened to the punt-plug—there it was, plain to see at that very moment—and of her cowardice, and the terrible magic of Kwang Si that had foiled her, watching all about her even in the darkness. And then her crying got the better of her, and she could say no more.

Wu Tong stood quite silent for a little. The gods may know what went on in his thick Mongolian headpiece.

"Give me your ferry," said Wu Tong, abruptly. She looked up at him in surprise.

"The ferry? But you can never make a living here."

"Never mind. I can do all I want. Is it mine?"

"It is yours if you want it." Despair was creeping over her again. She recognized that for the last few minutes something like hope had lived in her. But this young man was evidently abandoning her. Well, she could not blame him, only——

A footstep sounded near them. Ah Chee looked up. There was Kwang Si. Dignified, unhurried, benevolently smiling through his spectacles upon the pair, he held out a slender parcel, something bound in a wrapping of paper cloth.

"Ah Chee——" He handed it to her. She took it reluctantly.

"Go, dress. Wait—who is this man?"

Wu Tong took it upon himself to answer. He bowed his broad back in a gesture full of supple humility.

"Honourable sir, I am the new ferryman."

Kwang Si smiled amiably.

"Ah! Who says so?"

"I have just learnt that this woman is leaving the ferry for your honourable service, and so I have taken the ferry."

"But the ferry is mine."

Kwang Si still smiled.

"My Lord, my Protector, deign to look at this."

"I have taken it for a debt."

Wu Tong's supple back swooped again in respectful deprecation.

"Illustrious sir, I understood that you had taken the woman for the debt."

"Puh!" Kwang Si gently exhaled a breath of contempt. "What is a woman worth? If you want the ferry you must pay for it."

Wu Tong grew agitated. "Benevolent Upholder of Peaceful Prosperity——" he began to speak in capitals—"I have no money."

"Then you can't have the ferry," said Kwang Si.

"Stupendous and Magnanimous sir——"

"No money, no ferry." Kwang Si snapped it out very decidedly.

Wu Tong struck his broad forehead in despair. "My lord, you are my Father and my Mother, my Moon, my Stars, and my Sun—how much is this ferry?"

Kwang Si beamed amiably. The fellow after the usual lies was coming to business. Ah Chee was in the hut, assuming the new silk dress he had extracted as an extra present before he had permitted the passage of the bridge to the caravan now slowly moving into the town. This business could be utilized not only for profit but to while away the few minutes she must take.

He considered a moment, then:—

"Twenty liang," he said.

The young man, as he expected, with difficulty restrained himself from going into a fit on the spot. That was, of course, the stereotyped procedure at this stage of the bargain.

"It is impossible," said Wu Tong, as one who draws the breath of incredulity.

"Twenty liang," insisted Kwang Si, imperturbably. A little later on, of course, he would drop to fifteen, the young man would offer five, and they would clench the bargain at ten. Still, for the moment, an unyielding front.

"He clapped his heavy helmet on Kwang Si's pate."

"O Son of the Gods, O Favoured One—I have no money."

"Then let us say no more about it," came Kwang Si's rejoinder, according to rule and propriety.

Wu Tong turned with agility to where his parcels lay in a heap. He undid one or two with feverish haste, and literally cast himself at Kwang Si's feet.

"And yet, my Lord, my Protector, deign to look at this."

Kwang Si deigned, and his little eyes, for all his control, opened wide for a second. Wu Tong had got out the helmet of the Siamese god from its wrappings. The breast-plate followed, the thigh-pieces—— Piece by piece Kwang Si saw the astonishing masterpiece laid out before him. To Wu Tong it was so much metal. Kwang Si was an artist to his finger-tips. He had knowledge. His heart gave a great bound. At the first glance he knew the suit of armour for a work of the sheerest art. A fury of desire to possess it leapt in him like a flame. He smothered a gasp, then, with all the instinct of the bargainer roused, he veiled his emotion in a masterly lack of interest, and waited for Wu Tong to begin. Did the clod know what he had got hold of? His first words seemed to indicate that he did.

"SEE," said Wu Tong, holding up for the mandarin's inspection the helmet so exquisite in its workmanship that the old tyrant felt giddy. "If I have no money, here's money's worth. My Lord, my Protector, deign to look at this. Here's something worth—the gods alone know what. Here's armour."

Kwang Si gave an artistically disdainful shrug of the shoulders.

"Pooh! Very poor stuff!"

"O my Lord!" exclaimed the shocked Wu Tong. "I take the gods to witness here is a fine piece of work. It came out of a Siamese temple, off a god there. Look at the inlay—gold, silver—and the bulk of it fine bronze. And maybe," continued the innocent, "the very work's worth money."

Kwang Si's heart leapt again; the fool had no knowledge.

"Rubbish!" he said. "A prentice's job, I know."

Wu Tong accepted it in all good faith.

"You know better than I, my lord; still, as lump bronze with the gold and silver thrown in, here's a fair fifty liangs' worth."

Kwang Si sneered. "Ten," he said—and felt his palms sweating.

"Twenty at least, O Sapient One," rejoined Wu Tong.

("All goes well," reflected Kwang Si. "I have him," snickered Wu Tong inwardly.)

"What should one do with such a weight?" objected Kwang Si.

Wu Tong let himself go.

"Resplendent Sir, this is ceremonial armour, fit for a prince, or a god, or some such great man as your illustrious self, on an important occasion, a procession, a Dragon Feast, say, when magnificence blazons itself in the public eye and dazzles the mob. Conceive yourself, O my lord, encased in such gorgeousness—what a figure of a man. A moment—a single moment, grant to your slave"——(Wu Tong was busy about his man). "There, Honourable Sir," (he had clapped the heavy helmet on Kwang Si's pate, first, in all humility, removing the round hat). "It is not enough to be great. In a world of blind asses one must condescend to look great also. Now, the breast-plate—the back-plate—ah, what a god! The arm-pieces. If ever a god should die, whom among men should the gods elect in his place but such a man as this? Observe, unworthy one"—he whipped round on poor Ah Chee who, with her detested finery on, emerged at that moment from the hut—"prostrate yourself in adoration, as I do." He did. Ah Chee did not. Wu Tong, permitting himself to rise to his knees, went gabbling on. "Sir, I am not only admiration, I am veneration as well. I cannot but adore you in this guise." On went the thigh-pieces. Kwang Si beamed on him as his rapid fingers secured the metal pieces in place. "The sword! The sword!" He buckled on the weapon. "You are Power," Wu Tong assured the gloating mandarin, "you are Majesty. You are Terror. Who"—he addressed himself to Ah Chee—"are we, that we should be permitted to gaze on such Magnificence? See how the sun, that should by now have set, has delayed his departure to gaze respectfully on you. The god claims you as a relative. You are indeed the Brother of the Sun, the Uncle of the Moon."

KWANG SI stood enraptured, endeavouring to smother, in appearance at least, the inward exultation that set him throbbing.

"He induced Kwang Si down the steps."

"How much do you say this is worth?" he asked, with a feeble attempt at disparagement in his voice.

"Sir," shouted Wu Tong, in a frenzy of abject admiration, "I refuse to put a price on it. Deign to accept it. Honour me. Let me be so presumptuous as to make you a proposition."

"Proposition?" said Kwang Si, warily.

"An exchange, my lord. Let this ferry be your gift to your servant, and permit me in all humility to yield to you this suit of armour, once worn by a god, only to prepare it for you. Accept, accept," he went on, earnestly, "and in return make me a gift— a gift of the ferry, not a sale, O Mighty One, but an interchange of gifts, to bring me for ever good luck in my ferrying."

Kwang Si thrilled. The armour was heavy. It weighed down his old shoulders, and the helmet, a trifle on the large size, was inclined to work down over his nose, but the rapture of possession that took him made these things of no account.

He beamed graciously on the blockhead standing a pace or two away, gloating in half idiot fashion over his fantastic "exchange."

"Very well. Why not? 'Tis your request, and I grant it."

Wu Tong boiled over again.

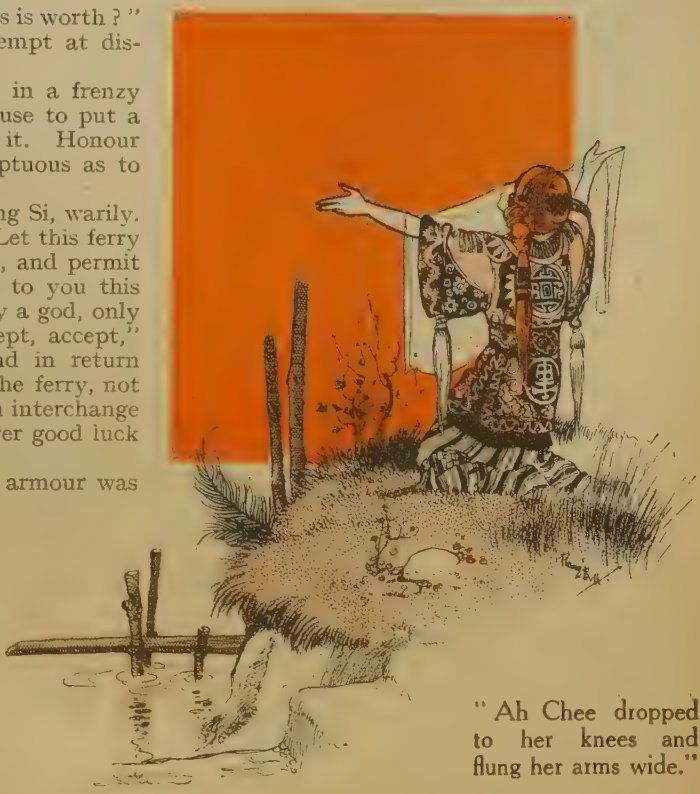
"A thousand thanks. Ten thousand thanks. Oh, joyful day! Oh, auspicious hour! Oh, good luck beginning to my new employment! Sir, come often to this ferry, that I may enjoy the pleasure of honourably rowing you across the river. I am indeed the most unworthy of all unworthy persons before your Estimable Greatness."

Kwang Si condescended an affable bend of the head.

"I will occasionally come." He turned to Ah Chee. "Ah Chee, come you."

She made one step and stood still.

"I am pleased with you." He appraised her, perhaps with much of the same feeling with which he had first surveyed the armour. "Come with me. Young man, take us across."



"Ah Chee dropped to her knees and flung her arms wide."

THE young man stood aghast. A look of horror flashed from his staring eyes.

"What! Together?" burst from him.

Kwang Si stared in his turn.

"Why not?"

With trembling lips and faint voice Wu Tong turned to the skies a face touched with anguish.

"Oh, intolerable woe and bad luck if I dared do such a thing. May the gods forgive us all!"

"Why—what's the matter?" asked the puzzled Kwang Si.

"Sir," stammered Wu Tong, "a woman in my punt for my first job! To ferry a woman over water! Is not a woman at all times a bringer of bad luck, and is it not known to all the ferry craft that to allow one in the punt for one's first job brings a ferryman to ruin? Alas! alas! sir, send to me a swordsman, and let him slice off my wretched head." He dropped to his knees in the dust. "Miserable me, that such a task should be laid upon me. Great One, draw the sword and smite off my head." He stretched out his thick neck invitingly. Kwang Si was immensely tickled.

"Son of a she-ass, there's a simpler way than that. Row me over alone, and then come back for the woman."

Wu Tong sat up on his heels and went off into another ecstatic outburst.

"O Stupendous Brainpan! Dolt and despicable person that I am! Give thanks, unworthy person" (this to Ah Chee in a voice of stern admonition), "for the condescension this marvel among men has deigned to show towards you and me. Sir," he went on, "I see most clearly that it was intended that I should meet prize luck with

you. I shall take you over for nothing for my first passenger, and this woman shall pay double." He leapt nimbly to his feet. "This ensures me liberal pay and the patronage of the great all my days. Descend into the punt, sir, and you, entirely negligible one, stand back."

HE induced Kwang Si urgently down the steps, and with a broad and imperious hand on her breast swept Ah Chee out of the great man's way. As he did so he flashed an eye at her. A muscular convulsion swept momentarily over his face. Poor, bewildered Ah Chee wondered for a second if some sort of message were intended, but the flash was gone before she could probe. The two men were in the punt, the mooring rope was loosened from the ring, and the punt pushed off, Kwang Si seated on the front platform, Wu Tong, with little knowledge but a fine exhibition of muscle, plying the long pole. The sun was now down, the river ran darkling, shadows came creeping over the swift stream. The tall reeds at its edge gave out a quiet, sinister whispering as the night wind tantalized them.

Ah Chee sat at the top of the steps and waited her turn. He had failed her. He had said never a word of succour, yet she had gathered hope from his presence. As she had changed her clothes in the hut she had strained her ears to catch what he said, and in his very tones expectation had lived.

She had caught wildly at the intangible sense of possible rescue. What should happen she could not guess, but while this young man stood there anything had seemed possible. But he had given her over to despair again. Either he had relinquished the task as beyond him, or, more possibly, he had never had intention of helping. So—what must be must be.

AND at that she was aware of a bubbling scuffle from midstream, an exclamation, a squeak, a confusion of cries and actions, all hurried and distracted—and even as she looked the punt tipped one end under, other went up. Kwang Si stood up, then the punt gave a roll, and the Great One and the Inconsiderable Person with the punt pole went under together.

Ah Chee dropped to her knees and flung her arms wide in her sense of catastrophe.

"O gods!—if it is permitted to a woman to pray to the gods—save them!" A head appeared in the dusk, well out in mid-stream, yet distinctly nearer to the steps than the spot in which the punt had gone under. "At least," corrected Ah Chee, "save the young man."

Half-a-dozen strokes, and it became apparent that the gods were obliging. Wu Tong's dark face, smiling amiably as he blew, came nearer and nearer. He touched bottom near the shore, his shoulders emerged, he waded in towards the steps. Ah Chee, aware that something unexpected and terrible had happened, realized that there was an element in the event not altogether maleficent.

"What happened?" she asked, faintly.

Wu Tong, soaked, panting, and smiling, sat down near her on the top step.

"Something about me must have offended the gods, Ah Chee. Perhaps they did not wish me to be a ferryman after all. Ah, well, I must go home to Yunnan and be a farmer. You must come too."

Ah Chee felt that this young man was settling things in a way that brooked no opposition

"What happened?" she repeated.

HE showed her in the palm of his hand a smallish disc of wood, with a thin cane attached.

"The boat plug?"

He nodded. "Yes. I must have given it a pull—somehow—and it must have come out." He sighed as he gazed over the river, now rapidly vanishing in the darkness. "Right in the middle, too," he remarked, gloomily. "And my first passenger. Clearly I was out of luck. But who are we, O Fellow Worm, to question the wisdom of the gods?"

Ah Chee stood up.

"Wu Tong," she said, "we must go. To-morrow morning, to-night perhaps, they will search for him."

"At present," replied Wu Tong, "the Important Person is anchored to the bottom with a suit of armour of no little weight buckled on to him. *I* buckled it on," he commented, musingly. "I also, at the last moment, managed to slip a loop of this round his ankle." She saw that in his hand he held one end of the punt's mooring rope. The other end curved out into the river. "Let us sit on the steps awhile. When it is dark we will pull him ashore."

Ah Chee shuddered—but she sat down.

"We don't want him," she said.

"No," said Wu Tong, reflectively, "but I want my suit of armour."

Snakes Alive!

By CROSBIE GARSTIN

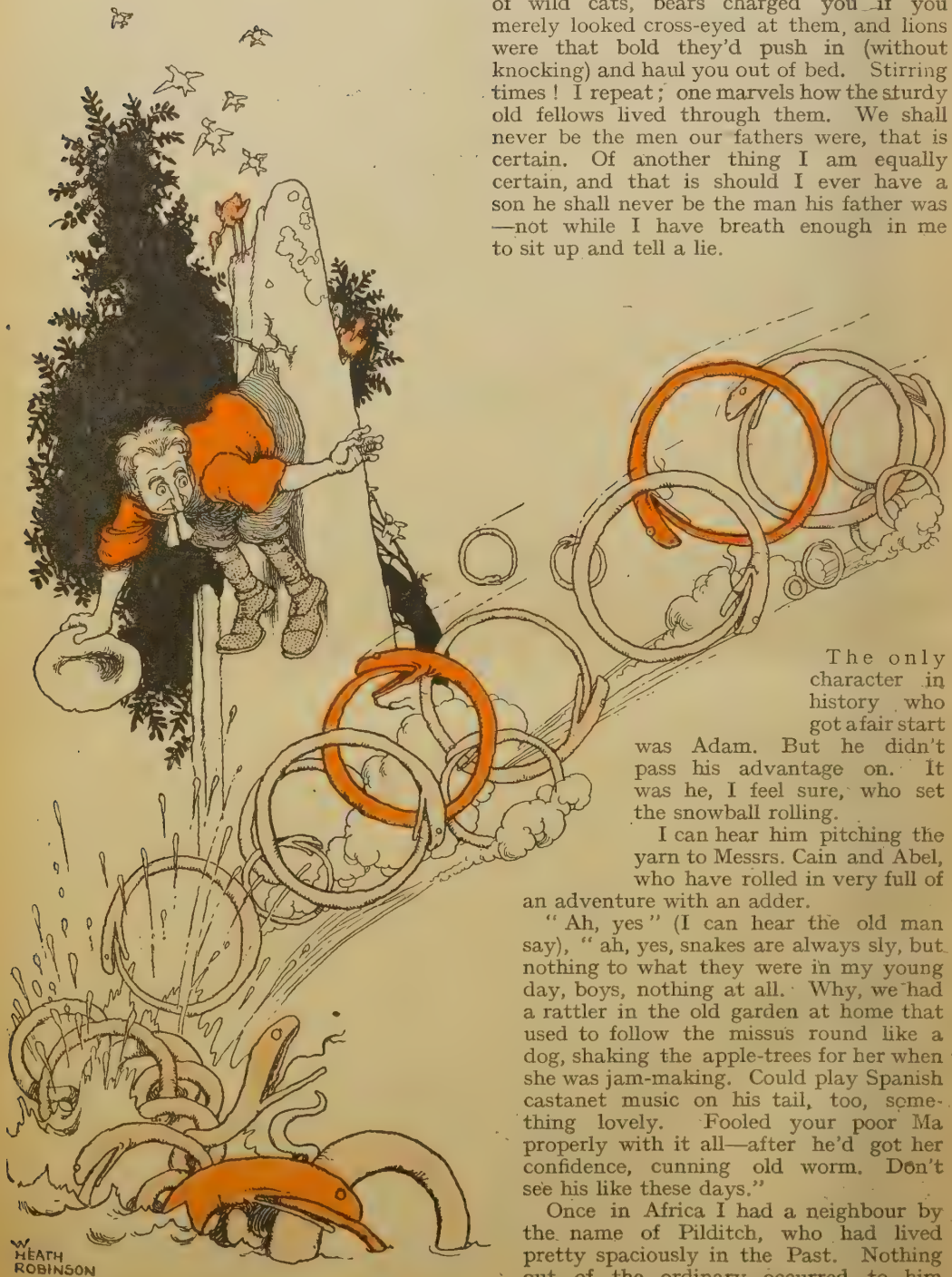
Illustrated by

W. HEATH ROBINSON

MY one regret is that I did not live in the Past. It must have been a right stirring time, by all accounts, peopled by giants, big with heroic living. We shall never see the like in our degenerate day. I have spent several years on frontiers both hot and cold in pursuit of adventures and a few have come my way from time to time, but they were nothing to the experiences I should have met with had I been my own papa. Old pioneers north and south, east and west, have wagged their hoary heads, licked the beer-drops off their whiskers, and assured me of this. In their young days the droughts were twice as severe as they are now, the cold snaps thrice as snappy. In their young days cyclones moved mountains, snow-slides slid up-hill as well as down, forest fires burnt

"In a frenzy of despair he hurled his butter and his hat at it. The snake slipped upon the butter and the hat took the maiden behind her shell-like ear, waking her out of her trance."

for years, bronchos bucked for hours, kangaroos were as full of fight as a bag of wild cats, bears charged you if you merely looked cross-eyed at them, and lions were that bold they'd push in (without knocking) and haul you out of bed. Stirring times! I repeat; one marvels how the sturdy old fellows lived through them. We shall never be the men our fathers were, that is certain. Of another thing I am equally certain, and that is should I ever have a son he shall never be the man his father was—not while I have breath enough in me to sit up and tell a lie.



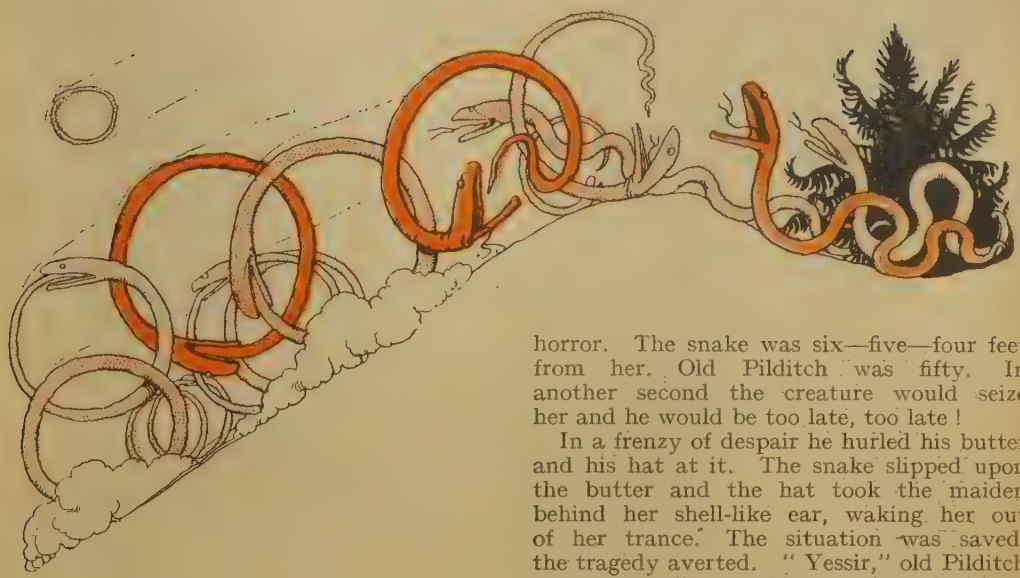
"I hung there waving my hat and cheering, while the whole boiling outfit of snakes whizzed by underneath me."

The only character in history who got a fair start was Adam. But he didn't pass his advantage on. It was he, I feel sure, who set the snowball rolling.

I can hear him pitching the yarn to Messrs. Cain and Abel, who have rolled in very full of an adventure with an adder.

"Ah, yes" (I can hear the old man say), "ah, yes, snakes are always sly, but nothing to what they were in my young day, boys, nothing at all. Why, we had a rattler in the old garden at home that used to follow the missus round like a dog, shaking the apple-trees for her when she was jam-making. Could play Spanish castanet music on his tail, too, something lovely. Fooled your poor Ma properly with it all—after he'd got her confidence, cunning old worm. Don't see his like these days."

Once in Africa I had a neighbour by the name of Pilditch, who had lived pretty spaciously in the Past. Nothing out of the ordinary occurred to him while I knew him (unless you count a bout of delirium tremens), but in his young days—ah, ha, his young days! —he had seen a thing or two.



A trader down south had been caught by a python and slowly crushed against a tree. In the nick of time his gun-boy arrived and blew the reptile's head off. It was a near thing—half the trader's ribs had been cracked. Old Pilditch admitted that it was a near thing, he knew what pythons were like, they were wily birds, had had a bit of an affair with one himself, 'way back in 1882, when they were even wilier. He had been out buying some butter at a native kraal one hot afternoon and was strolling home to camp along the banks of the Bembesi, fanning the butter with his hat and thinking how nice it would be to be sitting on the North Pole, a mug of iced lager in either fist, when what should he perceive, to his amazement and horror, but a beautiful white woman lying asleep in the shade of a baobab tree with a monstrous great python wriggling stealthily towards her!

(I know exactly what you're muttering, best-belovèd reader. You're muttering: "Yes, but what the deuce was a beautiful white woman doing lying about under trees, or in Matabeleland at all, in 1882?" When I asked old Pilditch that self-same question, he replied: "Go to Blazes!" The same to you, best-belovèd.)

Anyhow, what was old Pilditch to do? He had no gun, he had not even a pocket-knife (and if he had had four dozen they wouldn't have been any use to him). The monster was fast approaching the unconscious maiden. Pilditch yelled a warning to her and rushed to the rescue. She sat up, blinking. The serpent was within ten feet of her. "Run!" screamed old Pilditch. The maiden was incapable of movement, she appeared hypnotized by the crawling horror. The snake was six—five—four feet from her. Old Pilditch was fifty. In another second the creature would seize her and he would be too late, too late!

In a frenzy of despair he hurled his butter and his hat at it. The snake slipped upon the butter and the hat took the maiden behind her shell-like ear, waking her out of her trance. The situation was saved, the tragedy averted. "Yessir," old Pilditch would say, "that old worm was properly baffled. He skidded like a wet tyre on an oily road, sideways and backwards, round and round; couldn't get a toe-hold nohow. The rocks was hot and smooth, you see, and the butter melted. The more he writhed the more he greased himself until; in the end, he was slithering round as helpless as a pig on roller-skates, hissing steam, hot tears rolling out of his eyes. When the duchess had done laughing I took pity on him and killed him with a rock. She had him stuffed, and now wears him as a boa at all society functions, I believe."

OLD Pilditch and I were at the railway siding one day waiting for something to happen when Page-Parsons came along and sat down beside us. In the course of conversation he mentioned that he had just come upon and killed a hoop-snake.

"A what?" Old Pilditch inquired.

"Hoop-snake," Page-Parsons repeated. "Why? What's the matter?"

Old Pilditch had hoisted himself off his perch and, shading his eyes with his hand, subjected the horizon to a close scrutiny.

"It's all right," he said, at length; "it couldn't have been a queen. Lucky for you."

"A queen?" we ejaculated.

Old Pilditch nodded. "Certainly. Hoop-snakes have queens just the same as bees, ants, and revels—only they're far more jealous of 'em. Of course things are different now, but in my young days, when serpints was twice as plentiful and three times as cunning, a chap took a good long think before he put it across a queen hoop-snake."

"Why?" we asked.

"Because every other hoop-snake in

the neighbourhood would up and chase you, scores and millions of 'em."

"Well, you could always walk away, couldn't you?" said I.

Old Pilditch snorted. "Walk away! Hark to the boy! W-ell, you might be able to *now*, perhaps, now that they're all thinned out and tamed-like, but in my young days——! Do you know why they're called 'hoop' snakes?"

"Because of their markings, I suppose," said P.-P.

"That's where you show your blighted iggnerence," said old Pilditch. "Now I'll just tell you. Years ago when I was fresh in this country and nearly as blighted iggnerent as you two I was walking through the Sinyow Hills when I came across a queen hoop-snake, and knowing nothing of the species and having a natural dislike for the whole wriggler family I put it across her and went on my way whistling 'Two Lovely Black Eyes' and thinking no more about it. I had got as far as the Rooi Kopje, where the trail goes up and down like a switchback, when I heard a great rustling behind me like wind running through grass. I turned round and, lo and behold! the veldt was alive with hoop-snakes, scores and millions of 'em, all coming for me, mouths open, tongues out. Gosh, I was scared. I went up the hill like a roan antelope, them after me, hissing and spitting like forty thousand boiling kettles. Up that hill I went and down t'other side without drawing breath. It was only when I was half-way down that I dared look back and there wasn't a snake in sight. I stopped running and walked on, laughing to think how easily I had out-run them serpints. I had just about reached the bottom when all of a sudden I heard a kind of whistling-humming noise behind me, and what do you think I saw?"

"A canary?" I hazarded.

"A teapot singing?" P.-P. suggested.

"I saw what at first I thought to be forty thousand loose bicycle wheels trundling down the hill after me like wild-fire. I looked again, and saw it was nothing more or less than the whole boiling tribe of hoop-snakes! What do you think the cunning devils had done? Why, each one had swallowed his tail, rounded his back, and turned himself into a living hoop! Gosh, I was scared. I off again as fast as I could lay boots to the ground, up hill and down dale, with forty thousand raving snakes whirling behind me. Up hill I'd gain a hundred yards or so because the perishers had to unhoop and wriggle for it, but down hill they'd gain two hundred yards. I could see that in another mile or so they'd have me. Boys, the ice-cold sweat poured from my brow."

"I should have thought it would have been getting warmed up by then," said I. "But never mind, go on."

"I RAISED the dust, I burned the breeze, I sped, I drifted, but 'tweren't no use; they were too much for me, and I hit the last hill on the road with the leader not six inches from me. Up the hill I toiled with them wriggling at my heels. I knew that they'd catch me on the next down-grade, but I struggled on—we old-timers never knew when we were licked.

"I panted to the crest of the hill. Beneath me lay the Bongola River. 'Ah, ha!' said I; 'once across the river and I'll laugh at 'em yet.' I booted it down-hill in ten-foot jumps. I heard the humming behind me again and knew the snakes had hooped themselves and were buzzing in my tracks. I flew, I flitted. I saw the river plain before me, and, oh, horror of horrors, it was in flood!

"Picture yourself in my position. An impassable river in front, rock-gorges to right and left, and forty thousand snakes pelting along behind. Gosh, I was scared! All of a sudden I saw the branch of a mimosa tree growing right across the track. It was a big jump, twenty feet if an inch, but I took it. I sprang out with all my might, just touched the bark with my finger-tips, and fell, fell. Suddenly, when I wasn't more than ten feet off the ground, I pulled up with a jerk. A little wait-a-bit thorn that I hadn't noticed growing out of a rock-crevice had hooked me firmly by the seat of my pants, and I hung there waving my hat and cheering, while the whole boiling outfit of snakes whizzed by underneath me. Their impetus was so great they couldn't stop themselves. The river was choked with drowned serpints for days. Do you understand how hoop-snakes get their name now?"

"We do," said P.-P.; "but tell me, if you were so firmly hooked, how did you get down in the end?"

Old Pilditch snorted. "Took my trousers off, of course. How the devil else do you suppose?"

The Tale of Twenty Errors

by

BARRY PAIN

ILLUSTRATED BY
JOHN CAMPBELL

The following story contains twenty mistakes—mistakes of facts, contradictions of one passage by another, and so forth—put in purposely by the Author for the ingenuity of the reader to detect. The solutions are given on page 556 so that the reader may find out whether he has succeeded in detecting them all and whether he (or she) is as clever as he thinks he is. Next month we shall publish another story of errors, with a prize for the best solutions.

ARNOLD HAYES stood at the great window of his studio. He paid but little heed to the glorious sunset immediately before him. He had come to a crisis in his life, and was deep in thought.

It was April, 1914, and Hayes was in his thirty-eighth year and still unmarried. Successful in his art and not dependent on it for a livelihood, with many friends of both sexes, he had found the bachelor life pleasant enough—so pleasant that marriage seemed to him too hazardous an experiment.

And then he had met Patricia—had met her many times and been fascinated by her. On the mantelpiece at one end of the studio was his letter of proposal to Patricia. He had written it that afternoon. The envelope was stamped, sealed, and addressed to her. But he could not make up his mind to post it. Turning to the mantelpiece he picked up the letter, laid it down again, paced three times the length of the studio, and took it up once more.

It was himself, not Patricia, that he doubted. He knew isolated things about himself, but he did not know himself thoroughly. The six-foot man must walk back from the three-foot mirror if he would see himself reflected at full length in it. Hayes had no power to detach himself and see the complete picture in the mirror of his mind. They cared for one another now—at that last dance it had been practically admitted—but would he be able to hold her love? Might there not be qualities in him of which she was yet unaware—qualities which she would detest?

On the other hand, had he not gone too far to draw back? Would she not be confident that this proposal would come? Confidence in us makes us deserve confidence. Not without reason did Nelson give the message to his signal-officer: "England confides that every man will do his duty." It was this consideration that decided him. Slipping the letter into his pocket, he looked round for his hat.

And then came a gentle rapping at the outer door of the studio.

He opened the door. Before him stood a young girl. She was simply dressed. Simplicity was denoted, too, in her pretty face. Her expression had the confidence of innocent childhood.

"Good evening," she said. "Would you like to paint me, please?"

He was conscious that this was not what a professional model would have said.

"You sit for the figure?" he asked.

"Oh, anything," she said, with the sweetest of smiles.

"Come in for a minute."

She came into the studio, looking round her with evident interest.

"Take off your hat, please," he said.

"What for? Oh, yes, I see."

"And now, would you mind taking your hair down?"

She felt for hairpins. Her hair—a rich, warm brown—fell below her waist.

"I've rather a lot of hair," she said.

"You have. It's good. Tell me, did you ever sit before, Miss—Miss——"

"Miss Merlin. No, I never did. But I can sit quite still without moving an eyelash."

He laughed. "Oh, it won't be necessary to sit quite so still as all that. Very well. I'll paint your head. Can you be here to-morrow at ten?"

"Of course. But can't you start now?"

"No. The light's gone. Why?"

"Because I want some money to get something to eat."

He laughed again. "Nonsense!" he said. "You've got heaps of money."

"I've got some. But it's the rent for Mrs. Gimley to-morrow, Saturday. I can't touch that. And I've been going round studios all day, and nobody wanted me—at least, not at once, though they took my address, some of them."

"Uncle Attenborough would give you a fiver on that necklace of old amber you're wearing. It's particularly fine."

"But I don't want to do that. All right, I'll be here at ten. But I'm rather hungry, and it's a long time to wait."

AND then Arnold Hayes did what he had very rarely done before—he advanced money to a model. He pulled out his pocket-book and handed her a new Treasury note for one pound.

"Well, you'll have this to be going on with," he said. "It's the regular advance fee on engaging a model." And let us hope that the recording angel did not reckon this kindly lie against him.

"Really? It seems a lot. Shall I earn as much as that?"

"Much more. You'll be sitting for several days, you see—unless you put me in the cart, as some models do, and don't keep your appointments."

"Well, I don't understand money. Father said no Merlin ever understood money, and he didn't understand it himself. No more did Aunt Rosemary. But I never put people into carts, and I'm punctual. Thank you so much."

At his direction she wrote down her address on a slip of paper for him—a modest address at a Bloomsbury lodging-house—and departed.

After she had gone, Hayes stood for a moment, looking at that slip. "A charming child," he said to himself, "and mighty paintable."

His picture, "The Rainbow," in the Academy that year had attracted a good deal of attention and been much admired for its wonderful fidelity to Nature. It represented a showery sky over a Scotch lake, with the rainbow reflected in the water. But landscape had been a new departure for him, and he did not propose to go on with it.

Patricia! The thought of her suddenly returned to him, and brought just a shade of annoyance with it. Still, he had made up his mind. The thing had to be done. He took the letter from the mantelpiece and a few minutes later hurried to the post with it.

Miss Merlin was exactly punctual on the following morning. Every pose that she took was full of charm, and Hayes considered that he had made a find. She was much relieved to find that she might talk while she was being painted.

"I like talking," she said. "There's such a lot to say about things."

"Go ahead," said Hayes, smiling. "Tell me all about yourself. What made you think of being a model?"

"That was because the two Pitson children got measles."

"I don't follow."

"I was going to teach them French. My mother was French, and I speak it quite perfectly. But now the little Pitsons can't begin until they're out of quarantine. So I had to do something else. And Mrs. Gimley said that any artist ought to be glad to paint me."

"I'm inclined to agree with Mrs. Gimley. Are you all alone in the world, then?"

"Quite. My father died three years ago and Aunt Rosemary soon afterwards. My father was a lovely man and wrote poetry, but editors didn't seem to like it. We had a house then, and when father wanted money he sold one of the pictures or some of the furniture. We lived for a whole year on the portrait of an ancestress of mine that I was named after. She died in 1760."

"What was her name?"

"Dahlia Merlin. She had brown eyes, and that's why I was named after her. Both my parents had blue eyes, but mine are brown. It was Romney who painted her, and I remember that portrait well. It was

"'And now, would you mind taking your hair down?' Her hair—a rich warm brown—fell below her waist."

done when she was a girl of sixteen, and she was very pretty then. But she lived to be sixty-nine, and that must be awful. I'm eighteen years and two months, and even that seems rather a lot sometimes."

She went on chattering about her history, encouraged by frequent questions from Hayes. On her father's death, she and her Aunt Rosemary went to live in the lodgings which Dahlia still occupied. The few scraps of her father's property that remained were sold and the proceeds invested.

"So I get some money every half-year," she said. "But it's not much—just about enough to pay Mrs. Gimley. If I want money to buy things to eat, or music or clothes, then I often make a hat for somebody—I make very good hats—or I teach French. Sometimes I earn a great deal, and then I do nothing at all until it is all spent."

It was evident that a considerable portion of her father's improvident spirit had fallen upon Dahlia. Hayes found himself trying to disapprove of it and rather fascinated by it. Yes, she was interesting.

In the rest Dahlia made friends with the studio cat, a pure sandy, and was even permitted to play with her kittens. (Hayes himself had never been permitted to touch them.) She wandered about the studio, admiring the carved ivories and saying

wonderfully right things about them. She buried her face in the bowl of June roses, deep crimson and sweetly scented. She criticized Hayes's drawing of her profile, and the criticism was both just and subtle.

Hayes kept her to lunch with him, somewhat to the surprise of his old housekeeper. He generally gave his models luncheon, but he did not generally lunch with them. After luncheon she sat again for an hour.

When at last she rose to go, he took the roses from their bowl and dried their stems.

"I wish you'd take these back with you," he said. "They'll be happier with you."

"But that's so kind. I'd love to have them. What sort are they?"

He was compelled to admit that they bore the prosaic name of William Allan Richardson.

"How perfectly terrible!" she said, earnestly.

AFTER she had gone he looked at his work and was fairly well satisfied with it. But he was possessed with a vague feeling of unrest that he found it difficult to account for. Patricia came back to his mind, and he began to reflect upon her many high qualities. He had never done this before. At that dance he had been conscious that he wanted her and had not troubled to ask why. Now he found abundant reason why he ought to want her, but, to be honest, was not sure that he did. Continuing the path of honesty, he admitted that Dahlia Merlin had made Patricia seem commonplace. And Dahlia had trusted him on sight more than Patricia had ever trusted him. Patricia had always been on her guard.

He pulled himself together. This would never do. In all probability he was going to marry Patricia and to be very happy. She was beautiful—a little expressionless, perhaps, but classically beautiful. She would manage a household to perfection. She had dignity. She had an even temper. She had a private income. The man who won her would be lucky.

But when on the following day the letters that had come by the morning post were brought to him and he found that there was no letter from Patricia amongst them, he felt very much like a man who has been reprieved. Clearly, she was taking time to think the matter over. Reflection upon a proposition frequently means the rejection of the proposition.

Well, he would just have to wait. He whistled cheerfully as he prepared for work that morning. He was unfeignedly delighted to see Dahlia when she arrived punctually at ten. And a little later Dahlia admitted her satisfaction with him.

"Isn't it sweet," she said, "when the luck knows better than you do?"

"How do you mean?" he asked.

"The day before yesterday, when I wanted to be a model, none of the artists could engage me at once. I was very sad about it, and thought I was not pretty enough. I nearly cried. But if they had engaged me then I should never have come to you. And this is ever so much better, isn't it?"

"Ever so much better for me, at any rate."

"Oh, me too. I do like this."

Once more he got her to talk about herself and her circumstances. He was shown Aunt Rosemary, limned in a few strokes—a gentle, blue-eyed, white-haired woman with the Merlin weakness as to money strongly accentuated and an uncontrolled passion for giving away everything she had got, and even anything that had been entrusted to her.

"Only twice," said Dahlia, "did I let her go to pay the week's milk for me. Each time it was the same. She met a beggar and he had all the money. And what was the consequence? I had to sit down and make another hat when I wished to lie on my back in Kensington Gardens. So it became agreed between us that in future she should never have any money."

"And how did that work?"

"Splendidly, except once when she was taking my watch to be mended. It was bad luck that she met a woman with two babies and an ulcer. The watch had to be sacrificed. She was sorry afterwards. I didn't mind much, because you can always ask somebody the time. But after that I'd nothing left of our old family things except my amber necklace. And you wanted me to sell that, or to pawn it, didn't you?"

"Not seriously," said Hayes. "I knew it wouldn't be necessary."

"Of course. You'd have liked Aunt Rosemary. She said the most beautiful things and I loved her. But she died and left me all alone."

"I don't think you'll be all alone for very long," said Hayes.

"No? Why? Well, of course there's still Mrs. Gimley. She's good and very fat. She says that if she lived on bread and water it would all turn to fat with her, because it's in her constitution. But she's really kind, and when I was ill she tried to cheat me by charging me too little, but I found her out. And that was no good, because she went straight away and bought me real plover's eggs."

"I like Mrs. Gimley," said Hayes. "You may tell her so if you like. Let's rest now. I'm feeling mighty lazy."

Dahlia stepped down from the throne.

"If I could paint," she said, "I should never be tired of it."

"That's just it. I can't paint—not as I want to. When were you ill, and what with?"

"It was last September. I'd meant to have a holiday by the sea, and then the money had to be used for something else, and I was very tired of talking French to people who couldn't talk it. So I couldn't sleep, and got headaches, and Mrs. Gimley got a doctor and it was very horrid."

"Fond of the sea?"

"Very."

"So am I. We'll go there this afternoon."

"Not really?"

"Oh, yes. It will only be the tame and civilized sea that they have at Brighton. I'll 'phone for a car. We'll start after lunch, and dine in Brighton, and I'll bring you back to your lodgings by eleven. That's settled. Now to work again."

"I can't thank you," she said. "But I'm going to look much too happy to paint." She mounted the throne again. "This is my birthday—I think you must have guessed it."

IT was nearly midnight. Hayes had returned from Brighton, and alone in his studio he faced the situation. What was the use of self-deception? He had fallen in love with Dahlia Merlin at their very first meeting, though he had not realized it then. He had no doubt about it now. This was the real, inevitable, final love. The fact that he had sent a proposal of marriage to Patricia could not be allowed to stand in the way of it. It would be positively wicked for him to marry Patricia now. Patricia had her attraction, but it was a hundred per cent. less than Dahlia's. The possession of her was an absolute necessity; life without her had become unthinkable. It amazed him that it should have taken him more than three days to discover this.

The somewhat commonplace joys of motoring to Brighton had been turned into a poem by Dahlia's delight in them. She had not seen the sea for years and looked forward with pathetic eagerness to seeing it again. He questioned her as to the holiday that had been deferred because "the money had to be used for something else," and found that Dahlia had lent the money to an old woman who had no earthly claim on her, unless the fact that Dahlia sometimes bought chocolates from her constituted claim, and the old woman had never returned it. Truly some of her Aunt Rosamond's generous proclivities seemed to be shared by her.

Yes, Dahlia was too sweet, too childlike, too trustful. She needed somebody to look after her in this cold and scheming world, and Arnold Hayes intended to do it.

On the return journey Dahlia, happily tired, had fallen asleep with her head on his shoulder, and had afterwards apologized for it. Apologized! And when they reached her lodgings and she said good-night to him, she told him as she thanked him that it was the happiest birthday she had ever had. All the day everything she had said or done had made her seem more and more adorable in his eyes.

If, as he feared, Patricia accepted him, he was determined to write and tell her that a mistake had been made. It would not be pleasant, but anything else would be much worse.

There were two letters for him the following morning. One was addressed in Patricia's handwriting. In it she said that she knew so good a friend as he had been would be glad to hear of her new happiness. She was engaged to be married to Major Tinley-Bosworth. Her accompanying estimate of the Major's high qualities may have been partial, and in any case can be omitted here. The amazing thing to Hayes was that Patricia did not say one word as to any letter received from himself.

The other letter, in an official envelope, explained the mystery. It contained Hayes's letter of proposal to Patricia. The Post Office had been unable to deliver it as nobody of that name was known at the address on the envelope. And then Hayes saw with great joy the mistake he had made. It was just after Dahlia had given him her address that he had posted the letter, and from sheer absent-mindedness he had written on the envelope, not Patricia's address, but Dahlia's. Mrs. Gimley had returned the letter to the postman.

And he recalled what Dahlia had said: "Isn't it sweet when the luck knows better than you do?"

Dahlia was as punctual as usual that morning, but she was rather quiet and did not seem in good spirits.

Presently, as he was beginning his painting, she asked: "When will the picture be finished?"

"This one? Oh, I ought to finish this one to-day with any luck. The chin just a little up, Miss Merlin. Thanks."

A moment later he saw that she had tears in her eyes and that her lip was trembling. Down went his palette and brushes at once. He came towards her, distressed.

"Why? What's the matter, dear?" he said.

She covered her face with her hands. "Because," she said, "this is the last time, and you won't want me any more."

The words were scarcely said before he was holding her in his arms and kissing her wet eyes, while she clung closely to him.

No more painting was done that day. But after luncheon Hayes and Dahlia went to Bond Street to buy a nice wedding present for Patricia—and forgot to do it. They had so much else to think of.

Christmas Puzzles at a Club

by HENRY E. DUDENEY

I WAS spending Christmas with my old friends the Rudgewicks, at Brightbourne-on-Sea. On Boxing Day my hostess, the younger members of the family, and a couple of friends were all going to the pantomime, and Rudgewick made the happy suggestion that he and I should spend the evening at his club.

"Chubb and Blankford are sure to be there," he said, "and Walker promised me that he would turn up. They are all, like ourselves, fond of a good puzzle, and we are certain to be well entertained."

Rudgewick was quite right. Walker was there, and he had brought on a friend, Dr. Martin. Blankford had just beaten Chubb at a serious game of chess and they were now playing the losing game. The losing game of chess is not a thing to be scoffed at. It is far from easy, and most fascinating when once you have "got the hang of it." You *must* capture a piece when you can, but if there are two or more options you can capture which ever piece you prefer. The first player who loses all his pieces wins. There is no such thing as check or checkmate, for the king may move into "check" (even to a square adjoining the opponent's king) and must be captured just like any other piece. A pawn may be promoted to a king, if desirable, and if a player has only a pawn or pawns on the board that are blocked and he cannot move, he wins. Those are the simple and only special rules.

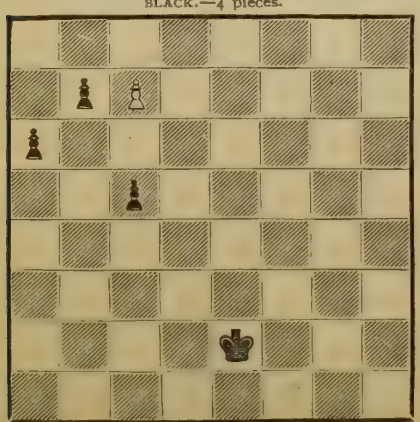
"Do you understand the losing game, sir?" Blankford asked me, after our various introductions were completed.

"Quite well," I replied. "I have played it for years, and at present have a strong opponent in my own neighbourhood."

"Then what do you make of the present position?"

I give a diagram of the exact position. Blankford was White and Chubb was Black. It was White's turn to move.

THE FIRST LOSING-CHESS PROBLEM.



BLACK.—4 pieces.

WHITE.—1 piece.

White to play and win—by losing!

It will be seen that White has succeeded in losing his king and all the other pieces except that solitary pawn, which he must promote to either a queen, a rook, a bishop, a knight, or a king next move. Whatever he makes it, Black will at once try to sacrifice all his pieces one after another. How can White win by sacrificing his own piece before all his opponent's have disappeared from the board? It all depends on the promotion and play. This is, so far as I know, the first Losing-chess Problem ever published, and it will be found an interesting little study.

SETTING THE CHESSMEN.

After we had demonstrated that there is only one possible way for White to win, Rudgewick pointed to another chessboard on an adjoining table, where the pieces were set up as shown in our second diagram.

"That is our steward's notion," he said, "of setting up the men for a game. He does not play chess, but just knows that the pieces go in those four rows with the pawns in front. He sets them up in that way to make sure that no piece is missing."

"I was thinking the other day," said Chubb, "that it would make a good puzzle to take such a position as that and discover in the fewest possible exchanges how to get them in correct order for a game, taking up a piece in each hand and making them change places at every move."

"That is easy enough," said Martin. "Thus, to put the pawns in order will clearly require four moves, and so on."

"Just as easy as sculpture," explained Walker. "You merely hack away the stone you don't want—and so on. My friend's words 'and so on' cover a multitude of difficulties. I don't think he will find it so easy as it looks."

"It seems to me," said Chubb, "that if we leave the Black king and eight of the pawns on their proper squares, the remaining twenty-three pieces can be adjusted in twenty-three moves, for you can get one piece in place at every move."

"But that cannot be the fewest possible moves,' Blankford insisted. "For example, the Black rook and knight in the upper row can each be put in its place in a single move."

I suggested that there was another little difficulty they had overlooked. In placing the two White bishops, say, in their places, which bishop do you propose to make king's bishop and which queen's? It may make all the difference to the solution. We left the matter for further analysis. Perhaps the reader can find the fewest possible moves.

ODDS AND EVENS.

We then put aside the chessboards and gathered round the cheerful fire. Rudgewick asked Walker if he had anything new in the way of puzzles.

"Well, here is a little thing—trivial but amusing," he replied. "Find the smallest odd number which, if you subtract an even number from it, remains even."

"Haven't you got something wrong?" asked Chubb. "Surely an odd number less an even number always leaves an odd number!"

"It all depends on how you do it. I have stated it quite correctly."

We were not long in finding the answer.

RIDING IN THE WIND.

"What do you make of this?" asked Rudgewick. "A man on a bicycle rode one mile in three minutes with the wind at his back, but it took him four minutes to return, against the wind. How long would it take him to ride a mile if there were no wind?"

"Simple enough," said Martin. "The average of 3 and 4 is 3½. It would take him 3½ minutes."

We all laughed at the doctor's simplicity, though it is the answer that a good many people would give without hesitation. A little figuring soon produced the correct answer. What is it?

THE SEVEN CIRCLES.

"I found my boy Reggie," said Blankford, "perplexed the other day over this little problem. He had drawn a circle with his compasses and wanted to describe six equal circles around it so that they all touched one another and the first circle."

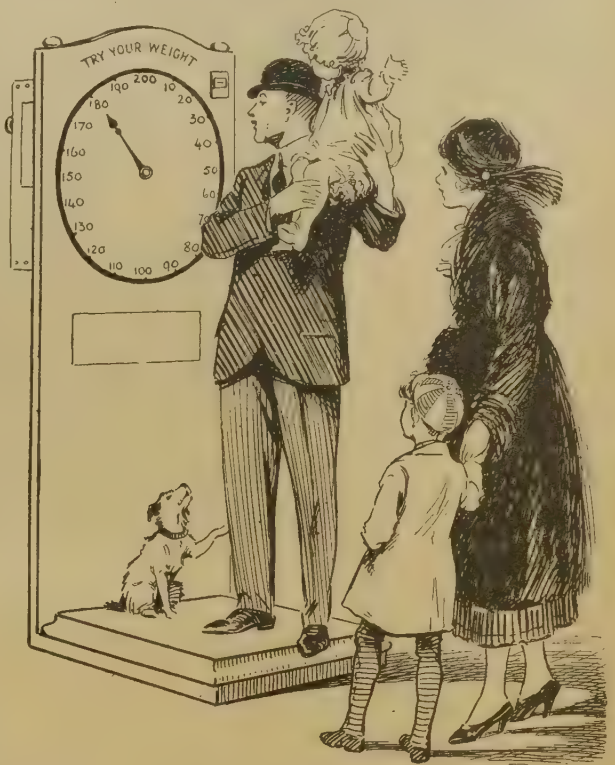
He illustrated the point by laying a penny on the table and placing six others around it, as shown in our illustration.

"I told him it could be done easily with the compasses alone. It puzzled him for some little time, though, of course, it is not at all difficult. Remember that one circle is already drawn."

Perhaps it will interest my more juvenile readers for a few minutes.

WEIGHING THE BABY.

"I saw a funny incident at the railway station last summer," said Walker. "There was a little family group in front of the automatic weighing machine, that registered up to 200lb., and they were engaged in the apparently difficult task of weighing the baby. Whenever they attempted to put the baby alone on the machine she always yelled and rolled off, while the father was holding off the dog, who always insisted on being included in the operations. At last the man, with the baby and Fido, were on the machine together, and I took this snapshot of them with my camera."



He produced a photograph, from which our illustration is faithfully made.

"Then the man turned to his wife and said, 'It seems to me, my dear, that baby and I together weigh 162lb. more than the dog, while the dog weighs 70 per cent. less than the baby. We must try to work it out at home.' I also amused myself by working it out from those figures. What do you suppose was the actual weight of that dear infant?"

AN ALPHABETICAL PUZZLE.

When all had come to an agreement as to baby's weight I asked them if they could form an English word out of the letters A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, with any two additional letters that they chose to select. It was decided to make a note of this for consideration at leisure.

A TYPEWRITER CRYPTOGRAM.

Chubb then told us that a business friend of his had invented a simple but very easily worked cipher for use in his secret correspondence. He had simply taken a typewriting machine and changed the key-letters

into utter disorder, so that when you struck the A it printed, say, M, when you struck B the result was R, and so on throughout. But the machine had visible writing, and his lady typewriter was so accustomed to watch this that the strange jumble of letters got on her nerves, so she refused to go on with it. Chubb said it reminded him of the diver who threw up his job because he could not spit on his hands when at work. His friend therefore had to do the cryptic correspondence himself.

The following is a sentence written on the typewriter and Chubb asked us if we could translate it. Of course, it is one of the simplest forms of cryptogram, and will not give the reader much trouble.

P gk ntyyz et ngz kz ezhpne pn g hmybmie bttd.

THE SIX COINS.

"Here is a neat little puzzle," said Rudgewick. "Three men, Andrews, Baker, and Carey, sat down to play at some game. When they put their money on the table it was found that they each possessed two coins only, making altogether £1 4s. 6d. At the end of play Andrews had lost five shillings and Carey had lost sixpence, and they all squared up by simply exchanging the coins. What were the exact coins that each held on rising from the table?"

We found it quite amusing to discover and allot correctly those six English coins.

A SQUARE WITH FOUR PENNIES.

"Can any of you place four pennies together so as to show a square?" asked Martin. "They must all lie flat on the table."

Rudgewick at once placed the pennies close together and pointed out that they enclosed a curvilinear square, but Martin insisted that it must be a rectilinear square. This seemed to the company to be quite impossible, but all laughed when the doctor showed the answer, and we admitted that it was quite a fair Christmas puzzle. Blankford declared it to be cunning.

ALPHABETICAL ARITHMETIC.

"But cunning," I remarked, "is often of great service in solving puzzles. As an example, here is one that a friend gave me the other day. He thought it very difficult, but was surprised at the rapidity with which I solved it—by low cunning!"

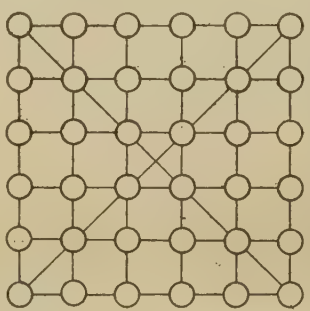
G I R E A T H N S
M

N E A G R T I H M S

It is a sum in simple multiplication. Every different letter stands for a different figure, so that 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 0 are all represented by letters of the alphabet. The puzzle is to substitute for each letter its numerical value, so that the sum in multiplication shall work out correctly.

THE LETTERED SQUARE.

These are the principal puzzles that were propounded on that interesting occasion. But before we went home Walker presented each of us with a little printed diagram, here reproduced, and asked us to place one of the letters A, B, C, D, E, F, and G in every one of the circles so that no letter should be repeated on any one of the fourteen straight lines. He confessed that it had beaten him up till then, but Rudgewick and I each solved it that night while having our last smoke before going to bed.



(The solutions to the puzzles in the above article, together with some new "Perplexities," will appear in our next issue.)

SOLUTIONS TO LAST MONTH'S "PERPLEXITIES."

526.—COUNTING OUT THE BLACKS.

The number of orders in which the four blacks can be taken is 24, but only the following 12 ways are possible: the other 12 will not work.

A B C D	Lowest number	0
C A B D	„	30
B A D C	„	71
D A C B	„	101
B C A D	„	175
D B A C	„	205
A C D B	„	216
C B D A	„	246
A D B C	„	320
C D A B	„	350
B D C A	„	391
D C B A	„	421

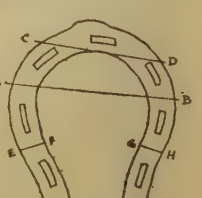
If you add 840, or a multiple of 840, to these numbers they will serve equally well. In the first case you *must* add 840, but I have placed the 0 to show that if you add any two numbers equidistant from the ends you will get 421. Thus 0 plus 421, 30 plus 391, and so on. This discloses a law the existence of which the novice would hardly suspect.

527.—AN ENIGMA.

SPARK (Park, Ark, spar, spa, par).

528.—THE HORSESHOE PUZZLE.

First make the cut A B. Then so place the three pieces together that with one clip of the scissors you can make the cut C D, together with E F and G H.



529.—A NEW STREET PUZZLE.

Brown's number must have been 119 and Tompkins's 84. The numbers from 1 to 84 sum to 3,570 and those from 1 to 119 to 7,140, which is just double, as stated.